THE BANQUET

(*IL CONVITO*)

DANTE ALIGHIERI

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THE BANQUET

(*IL CONVITO*)

OF

DANTE ALIGHIERI

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DANTE ALIGHIERI

TRANSLATED BY

KATHARINE HILLARD

98486

"O! uomini che vedere non potete la sentenza di questo libro, non lo rifiutate però: ma ponete mente la sua bellezza, ch' è grande."—*Convito*, ii. 12

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AL SAVIO DUCA MIO.

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INTRODUCTION.

I.

ON THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE "CONVITO."

THERE is no point, perhaps, among all the vexed questions of Dante chronology, upon which the critics are more at variance than the date of the *Convito*.[1] Fraticelli and Scolari think that it was written at different periods—the second and fourth books in 1298, and the first and third in 1314; Scartazzini holds it to have been composed between 1308 and 1321, and to have been, in part at least, one of the last things that Dante ever wrote; Witte assigns it to 1300–1308; Renier thinks the first and third books were written after Dante's exile (in 1302), the second and fourth partially, if not wholly, before that period; Foscolo thinks it was all written after 1313;

[1] I have preferred the spelling *Convito* to *Convivio*, as many of the older texts read, because the former is the usage of all the modern Italian writers, and to go back to the old form savours of pedantry. Both Giuliani and Fraticelli write *Convito*. Scartazzini, in his *Dante Handbook* (translated by Mr. Thomas Davidson), uses the spelling *Convivio*, but says the matter is of the very slightest importance.

Selmi considers it to have been written before the exile, with the exception of certain passages inserted in the first and fourth books; while Giuliani says it was entirely written after the exile, and before 1310 or very little later. One thing at least has been established by modern criticism, that is, that the fragment of the work that was finished (for Dante never carried out his design for the book) was written at intervals, as a commentary upon certain canzoni composed, and probably published, at still earlier dates.

There are, of course, the two ordinary methods of establishing these dates; from the historical data actually given in the book itself, or by comparing the differences of style and matter both in the course of the work and in relation to the other writings of Dante. Of these historical data there are very few which are not disputed, and the uncertainty of human judgment makes the latter method a very doubtful one, although it has the advantage of bearing more directly upon the history of Dante's thought. There is a great deal of truth in the old adage, that nothing lies like facts except figures; and we all know how delusive are months and years as measurements of the progress of a human soul. Great leaps in its development are sometimes taken in a few weeks, and long intervals of years, on the other hand, may tell for nothing. The *Convito* stands second in the great trilogy of Dante's works, and his life seems to have the same threefold aspect. Certainly the nature of his thought and the character of its expression

should be taken into account, as well as the mention of certain historical personages as living or dead at the time of writing. But here the "personal equation" comes in; for each critic will see changes in style in a different place, and the more one reads of these conflicting opinions, the more hopelessly confused one becomes. The only safe way for the student, therefore, is to read and study the original for himself, and to record, if he choose, for the benefit of others, the reasons that have led him to his own conclusions.

BOOK I.—Opening the *Convito* in search of these historical points, in the very first chapter we find that Dante tells us that the *Vita Nuova* was written before the entrance of his youth, but the *Convito* after that had passed away. As Dante says in Book iv. ch. 24 that the period of *Youth* lasts from the twenty-fifth to the forty-fifth year, he must have been over forty-five when this first Book was written, which gives us a date not earlier than the latter part of 1310.

In the third chapter he speaks of his long exile and many wanderings, which embraced the period between 1302 and his final refuge at Ravenna in 1316.

In the fourth chapter he makes similar allusions, and in this and several other passages of Book i. he refers to his already-won reputation as a poet.

He gives besides, in the first chapter, a sketch of his plan for the whole work, and speaks of Youth and Age as the subject of Book iv.; in the twelfth chapter, of Justice as the theme of Book xiv.; and in the eighth chapter tells us that he means in the last

Book (xv.) to show why the thing prayed for costs so dear. All these things point to a late date for Book i.

The contrary opinion is based first upon the fact that in the fifth chapter he speaks of writing at some future time a book on *Vulgar Eloquence;* and some of the critics claim that this book was written between 1305 and 1308, which would necessarily throw back the date of the *Convito.* On the other hand, many of them agree with Boccaccio, who tells us that Dante, having written a prose commentary in the Florentine dialect on three of his canzoni, and not having carried out his intention of commenting upon all of them (either because he changed his mind, or because time failed him, this work being called the *Convivio*), afterwards, and *very near his death*, composed a little work in Latin prose, which he called *De Vulgari Eloquentia.* Boccaccio is not very trustworthy as a chronicler, but as he was seven years old when Dante died, he ought to have known something of the events of so recent a past, and therefore I think we are justified in setting aside the argument for the early date of the *Vulgar Eloquence*, and therefore of Book i. of the *Convito.*

The second piece of contrary evidence we find in the fact that, in the sentence before quoted from the first chapter of the *Convito*, there is an ambiguous expression, over which much war has been waged. When Dante says that the *Vita Nuova* was written before the entrance of his youth, but the *Convito* after *that* had passed away,[1] "*that*" may refer either

[1] See last paragraph of Book i. ch. 1.

to the *entrance of his youth* or to his youth itself Selmi[1] thinks that the *entrance* is meant, and quotes. Book iv. ch. 21 (where *Adolescence* is spoken of, as the entrance or gate of life) and ch. 26 of the same book to prove that Dante, having therein applied the adjectives "temperate" and "manly" to Youth, the words "fervid" and "passionate" must apply to Adolescence (or entrance to Youth), and therefore it is his adolescence and not his youth that he describes as having passed away when the *Convito* was written.

But besides the fact that Dante speaks of his long exile in ch. 3, and that this did not begin till long after his adolescence had passed away, it can also be answered that if Dante does not apply the words "fervid" and "passionate" to Youth (in Book iv. ch. 26), neither does he apply them to Adolescence, which is characterized as *obedient*, *gentle*, and *modest*. The *Vita Nuova* is called fervid and passionate, the *Convito* temperate and manly, while Youth is described as temperate, and strong, and loving, and courteous, and loyal; so that but one word out of five is used in both places, the word "temperate"—an epithet surely as applicable to maturity as to youth, for, after all, Dante's idea of youth answers to the usual idea of maturity.

It seems probable, therefore, that Dante referred to his youth, and not the entrance to his youth, especially as it would be as absurd in Italian as in English to speak of an *entrance* as "passing away." And the

[1] *Il Convito di Dante*, Fran. Selmi, Torino, 1865.

first book, being an introductory one, was all the more likely to have been written, as an introduction generally is, after the others. And as Dante completed his forty-fifth year (and passed out of Youth) in 1310, the conclusion of Fraticelli and many others seems very reasonable, that a moment so full of political disturbance could hardly have been favourable to composition, and that not till after the death of Henry VII., in 1313 (and, indeed, some time after), was it at all likely that Dante could have found leisure and heart to gather up and arrange his material for so important a work as the *Banquet*. We may conclude, therefore, that the probable date of Book i. is not earlier than 1314.

BOOK II.—The second book of the *Convito* involves us at once in the history of the *Vita Nuova*. According to the best authorities, the prose of the *Vita Nuova* was begun about 1291, its first poems dating back as far as 1283 (the poet's eighteenth year), at which time, according to Villani, many poets and troubadours had met in Florence for the festival of the "Company of Love." Probably some of the last chapters were added at a later date, at some period after 1300; for § 41 apparently relates to the Roman pilgrimage of that year of jubilee, and § 43 to "the vision" of the *Commedia*.

Dante says that the *donna gentile* of the *Vita Nuova* (whom he declares in the *Convito*, Book ii. ch. 13, to be Philosophy) appeared to him for the first time when the star of Venus had made two revolutions after the death of Beatrice. According to modern astronomy

this would be in three years, two months, and eleven days, which, added to the 9th of June, 1290, would bring us up to the latter part of August, 1293. If to this we add the thirty months that Dante spent in the study of scholastic philosophy before he wrote the first canzone (upon which this book is a commentary), we should have February, 1296, as the date of the poem—a manifest impossibility according to the chronology of the *Commedia*, as it is put into the mouth of Charles Martel, who died in 1295[1] (*Par.*, 8. 37).

But if we take the calculation of the mediæval astronomers, they gave to the revolution of Venus the same time as that of the sun (365 days), which would make the interval mentioned by Dante *two* years instead of three. This is confirmed by *Conv.*, ii. 6, where he speaks of the Heaven of Venus as having an equal movement with that of the sun. Therefore the first appearance of the *donna gentile* was in June, 1292, which would bring the date of the first canzone to the end of December, 1294, giving ample time for Charles Martel to have read it, as he spent some time in Florence in 1295, the year of his death. This is the calculation of Lubin (*Intorno all Epoca della Vita Nuova*), with which Renier, in his valuable treatise on the *Vita Nuova*, entirely agrees.

We have, then, December, 1294, as the date of the first canzone, which, of course, preceded that of its

[1] It is also quoted by Dante in Sonnet 34 of the *Canzoniere*, Edit. Fraticelli.

commentary. But the critics seem to have quite overlooked the fact that the first chapter of Book ii. was in all probability written at the same time as Book i., and inserted as an introduction between the canzone and its exposition. For not only does Dante speak of it as a preface, but he uses in it the image of the *bread* prepared for his Banquet, so often used in Book i., but *nowhere else;* and the whole chapter is evidently inserted to enforce the declaration of Book i. ch. 1, that "my meaning is other than that which the aforesaid canzoni outwardly display," and to further insist that "books *may* be understood and *ought* to be explained"—notice the careful wording of this sentence—"in four principal senses; the literal, the allegorical, the moral, and the mystical." And with the *second* chapter the commentary proper begins in these words, "To begin then, I say that the star of Venus," etc.

We may conclude, therefore, that the first chapter of Book ii. was written after the rest, and probably at the same time as Book i. The fact that the theory of the spots in the moon given by Dante in the fourteenth chapter is refuted by Beatrice (in the second canto of the *Paradiso*), and that the order of the celestial hierarchies, as stated in ch. 6, is rearranged in the twenty-eight canto of the *Paradiso*,[1] goes to prove that the rest of Book ii. was written before 1300, the date upon which the whole of the *Commedia* is based.

There are no other historical data in Book ii., but

[1] Where Dante follows St. Dionysius instead of St. Gregory.

its matter and its style place it in direct connection with the *Vita Nuova*, and make it evident that it must have been written about the same time. The canzone describes the sorrowful soul of the poet, as the beginning of the *Vita Nuova* describes Love appearing to him with his joy changed to bitterest weeping. The battle of contending thoughts described in §§ 13 and 39, *Vita Nuova*, is identical with that related in bk. ii. ch. 8 of the *Convito*. In § 43, *Vita Nuova*, and in ch. 9, he declares his resolution to say no more of Beatrice for the present. In § 6, *Vita Nuova*, he composes a *serventese* containing the names of the sixty fairest ladies of the city, wherein his lady's name would take no other place than the *ninth*; and in ch. 15 of this same Book i. he refers to the Song of Solomon (ch. vi. 8, 9), "Sixty are the queens," etc., "but my dove, my perfect one, is but one," explaining that by the dove of verse *ninth* he means that Divine science (or Wisdom) which is full of all peace, and dwells in the Empyrean, or Heaven of Peace; and in § 42, *Vita Nuova*, he says that the sigh of his heart passes beyond the *primum mobile* to gain the Empyrean where his lady is. In §§ 10, 11, 18, 19, *Vita Nuova*, he speaks of the salutation of his lady, in which consists his beatitude—that salutation which was an act of her mouth, and the goal of all his desires; while in ch. 16 he explains what he means by the ambiguous (Italian) word *salute*, as given by the eyes and mouth (or *smile* and *speech*) of Philosophy.

BOOK III.—The second canzone, "Love that within my mind," etc., is quoted by Casella (*Purg.*, 2. 112),

therefore it was written before 1300; and this is the only date-point that can be found in Book iii. Fraticelli thinks that this Book was written in 1314, some time after the canzone, as Dante speaks of "the year this song was born," as if a long interval had elapsed. He considers that the character of its style shows a close connection with Book i., as it is, he thinks, the first sketch of a purely philosophical allegory far more in accordance with Book i. than with Book ii., its dignity of style and its philosophical conceits being all in harmony with the former. His opinion is that it was written at the same time as Book i., to serve as a link between Books ii. and iv., which were written at separate and earlier dates.

But it seems to me that there is a closer connection between Books ii. and iii. than between any of the others, Book iii. being the development of the subject of Book ii., and both having a close correspondence with the *Vita Nuova*, a correspondence even more remarkable in Book iii. than in Book ii. In the first place, if we compare Canzone ii. (preceding Book iii.) with Canzone i., *Vita Nuova*, we shall find most striking resemblances. In both poems their first stanza is devoted to describing the abstruse and lofty nature of the subject, and the difficulty of treating it in fitting words; their second stanza describes the high esteem in which his lady is held in heaven; while their third stanza relates her influence upon others, and the fact of her being the exemplar of all noble ladies. The *Vita Nuova* canzone says—

> "I say, whoe'er would noble lady seem,
> Must go with her," etc.;

the *Convito* canzone—

> "Let the lady fair who doubts my word
> Go where she goes, and study all her ways;"

and again—

> "Noble is that
> In every lady found, that's found in her."

Their fifth stanza is the *envoy*, sending the canzone forth to find the lady of whom it sings.

In the first chapter of Book iii., Dante defends himself from the charge of inconstancy, as in § 10, *Vita Nuova*, he speaks of the false and evil rumours of his infidelity which had procured him many troublesome hours.[1] Having declared, in the sixteenth chapter of Book ii., that "the lady at the window" (§ 36, *Vita Nuova*), who inspired this second love was no other than Philosophy, he proceeds (in Book iii. ch. 1) to describe his affection, not only for herself, but for all persons having any relations with her, either by acquaintance or *kindred*. Perez (in *La Beatrice Svelata*) refers to this passage to explain § 33, *Vita Nuova*, where Dante speaks of his second friend Cino da Pistoia, as "so closely akin to this glorious one that no one could be nearer."

In the second chapter of this book, as in § 35, *Vita Nuova*, Dante takes pains to define Love for the benefit of those who may complain that he has spoken of Love as of a corporeal substance. This is not so (he says in the *Vita Nuova*), for Love does not exist of itself as substance, but as an accident in substance.

[1] It seems to me highly probable that the "screen" of § 5, *Vita Nuova*, has the same meaning as the *donna gentile* herself, and represents that Philosophy who is in the "direct line" to celestial Wisdom.

And in the passage referred to from the *Convito*, he says that Love, subtly considered, is no other than the spiritual union of the soul and the thing beloved.

In ch. 8 he says the things that appear in her countenance overpower our intellect, as a feeble sight is overpowered by the sun; and in § 42, *Vita Nuova*, speaking of his lady in heaven, he writes, "Our intellect is towards those blessed souls like our eye, weak against the sun."

In *Conv.* iii. ch. 9, and in § 32, *Vita Nuova*, he describes his suffering from weak eyes. In §§ 10–12, *Vita Nuova*, the poet tells us how his lady deprived him of her most sweet salutation, whereupon he went away "to bathe the earth with bitterest tears;" and in ch. 13, *Conv.* iii., he tells us that Philosophy is "the beatitude of the intellect, and to be deprived of the sight of her is most bitter and full of all sadness;" while in ch. 15 he goes on to explain how "when I say that she was cruel, because she would not smile upon me, I mean that I could not understand her persuasions; and disdainful, in that she would not turn her eyes upon me, I mean that I could not see her demonstrations;" he having already declared that the eyes of this glorious lady are the demonstrations of Philosophy, and her smile her persuasions. Compare also §§ 18, 19, *Vita Nuova*, and especially the comments of Dante upon the latter section.

In ch. 14 he identifies his lady with the Wisdom of Solomon, "who was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was" (Prov. viii. 23), and with the *Logos* of St. John; while in § 24, *Vita*

Nuova, he calls the Lady Joan (of his friend Cavalcanti) *Primavera*,[1] because she *comes before* Beatrice, and says that indeed the name *Joan* has the same meaning, as it comes from that John who came before the true Light.

The third book of the *Convito*, in fact, as Dante promises in its first chapter, shows how his second love "from a little spark grew to a mighty flame;" and it shows also how, having in the first ten chapters displayed the literal meaning of the canzone as the praise of Philosophy, the mistress of the intellect, he goes on to show us "the allegorical and *true* meaning" of his words, whereby this lady turns out to be the inspirer of all philosophies, the Eternal Wisdom itself. So we see, says the poet, how the lady of whom I speak is true philosophy *in its essence*, and how by common usage her name is applied to all the sciences; "the Divine philosophy being of the Divine essence, because in her nothing can be added to her essence."

The ideas, then, of Books ii. and iii. and those of the *Vita Nuova* being so intimately related to each other (not to mention Dante's many references to the latter work in the course of the *Convito*, and his express declaration that the *Convito* was especially written "to help out" the *Vita Nuova*), we must concede, it seems to me, that there is a close chronological connection between the two works; and I, for one, cannot accept the theory of Fraticelli that

[1] Here there is an untranslatable play on the words *Primavera* ("spring"), and *prima verrà* ("will come first").

Book iii. was written long after Book ii., and about the same time as Book i. (1314). If this were true, would Dante have been likely to announce in Book i. ch. 8 that the subject of Book xv. is to be "why the thing prayed for costs so dear," but in Book iii. ch. 15 that it is to be "how virtue is rendered less beautiful by pride"? If these two books were really written about the same time, he would scarcely have changed his plan for the last one so materially.

BOOK IV.—In Book iv., which Fraticelli assigns to 1298, we have several historical data, but unfortunately, owing to the hazy condition of early Italian history, they are almost all open to dispute.

The first is in ch. 3, where Dante calls Frederic of Suabia "the last Roman emperor as to the present time, not counting Rudolph, Adolphus, and Albert, elected after his death," which gives us a period from the accession of Albert in 1298 to the accession of Henry VII. in 1308.

In ch. 6 Charles of Naples and Frederic of Sicily are both spoken of in the present tense, and their contemporaneous reigns cover the period from 1296 to 1309.

In ch. 14 Gherardo da Cammino is mentioned as dead. His death is said to have taken place at dates ranging over a period of seven or eight years; but Lubin has discovered a document in the archives of Graz which, he thinks, settles the question. It bears the date of July 26, 1301, and is a treaty of peace between the Count of Gorizia and *Gerardo da Cammino* on the one side, and the Count of

Ortemburch and the communes of Udine and Germona on the other, proving, therefore, that the said Gherardo (or *Gerardo*) was alive on the 26th of July, 1301. And this document is followed by another, bearing the date of 1302 (no month given), which speaks of *Riccardo* da Cammino (the son and successor of Gherardo) as at war with the Patriarch of Aquileja, showing that the father must have died late in 1301 or early in 1302. The flaw in Lubin's argument is, that it is an inference and not a certainty that Gherardo was dead when his son Riccardo is spoken of as if he were the head of the house. But the dates agree with Dante's mention of the father and son in the *Commedia*, and with the comment of *L'Ottimo* on *Par.*, 9. 49, which refers to Riccardo. "Here," says the old commentator, "Cunizza *predicts* the death of Messer Riccardo, and the *future* wars of Padua and Vicenza."

The precise date of Book iv. might be determined if we could find out who Manfredi da Vico was (mentioned in ch. 29), "who now calls himself Prætor and Prefect," and to what year this *now* refers; but even the indefatigable Lubin declines to grapple with this problem, the place[1] and the man being equally obscure, and contents himself with recommending the lovers of Dante to make an effort to solve it.

In ch. 16 we have Asdente, the famous cobbler-prophet of Parma, mentioned by Dante with Alboino della Scala and Guido da Castello di Reggio as alive,

[1] Vico is a miserable little village near Viterbo.

while he is spoken of in the *Inferno* (20. 118) as among the recently dead; most of the critics consider, therefore, that he died in March, 1300.

The reference to Count Guido da Montefeltro in ch. 28 is too indefinite to be of much use, but the fact that he is mentioned with Sir Lancelot seems at least to imply that he was dead when this passage was written. He died October 28, 1298—Witte says at Assisi. Dante speaks of him in the *Convito* as "our most noble Italian," citing his as an example of a pious end; while in the *Inferno* (c. 27) he beholds him writhing in its fires as a "fraudulent counsellor." The destruction of Palestrina, through Guido's treacherous advice to Pope Boniface VIII., took place in the latter part of the year 1298, and it is hardly probable that his share in the affair was known at once. It would seem, therefore, as if Dante wrote this chapter (the last but two of the book) in the interval between hearing of Guido's saintly death as a Franciscan friar, and the discovery of his treacherous counsel to Pope Boniface.

Putting together, then, these various data, we have, first, a period between 1298 and 1308; second, a period between 1296 and 1309; third, a date before July, 1301; fourth, a date before March, 1300; and finally, a date *after* October, 1298, which gives us the year 1299 as the probable date of Book iv.

In this book also, there are certain correspondences with the *Vita Nuova,* but they are fewer and less striking than in Books ii. and iii. In § 12, *Vita Nuova,* Love forbids the poet to ask to know more than can

be useful to him; and in *Conv.*, iv. 3, Dante quotes both Aristotle and St. Paul against seeking to know more than is good for us. So, in the twentieth chapter, he applies the same quotation from Homer to a soul filled with the Divine grace that he applies in § 2, *Vita Nuova*, to Beatrice—

> "Nor did she seem
> The child of mortal man, but of a God."

And the references in the canzone and the first chapter of this book to the cruelty and disdain of Philosophy correspond with the descriptions of the cruelty of Beatrice in the *Vita Nuova*, § 9, etc.

It seems to me a very difficult thing to found any argument as to date upon the differences in the literary style of the *Convito*, because the style everywhere rises and falls with the subject. Whenever Dante has to treat a question of geography, astronomy, etymology, or dialectics, the scholiast in him overpowers the poet, and we find dry and wordy disquisitions that it seems impossible to have been written by the poet of the *Commedia;* but when love of country, of philosophy, of nobility of soul, of Divine wisdom, inspire his pen, he rises to "the mighty line" of the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso.*

Taking, therefore, the few points of tolerable certainty as to the date of the *Convito*, I think we are justified in asserting that the *Convito*, like the *Vita Nuova*, is a prose commentary written at different times upon certain poems, also of different dates; that about the year 1314 Dante gathered up the three canzoni and their accompanying books

already written, and arranged the plan of the whole work, as he intended to complete it, in fourteen books and an introduction, making fifteen books in all; that he wrote at that time the whole of Book i. and the introductory chapter of Book ii.; that the rest of Book ii. and the whole of Book iii. were written in that period to which those final sections of the *Vita Nuova* belong that are so closely related to them; and that Book iv. was probably written in the year 1299, or at least between October 28, 1298, and March, 1300.

II.

ITS DESIGN.

In the second chapter of Book ii. Dante tells us that, exactly two years after Beatrice had passed away, he first beheld at a window that young and beautiful *donna gentile* of whom he speaks in § 36 of the *Vita Nuova*, and that he meant by her to represent Philosophy, in whom also Cicero and Boëthius had found consolation. That he imagined her as "a noble, beautiful, and most compassionate lady, and from that time forth he began to frequent those places where she showed herself most truly, that is, in the schools of the religious and the disputations of philosophers, so that in a short time, perhaps thirty months, love for her had destroyed every other thought" (*Conv.*, ii. 13). And he also explains most carefully that when he calls his lady cruel and

disdainful, he means that he was unable to understand the demonstrations of Philosophy.

But it seems that these allegories were misunderstood or not understood at all by many of his readers, and that evil reports of his inconstancy and levity of conduct began to be circulated, in spite of his often-repeated declaration of the nature of his love. He declared it to be of the *mind*, "that supreme and most precious part of the soul which is divine" (*deitade, Conv.*, iii. 2), and that he said Love held discourse within his *mind* to show that his love sprang from "that noblest part of human nature which is all truth and goodness," and in order to prevent "such false opinion of him as might consider his love to have anything to do with sensual delights" (*Conv.*, iii. 3). He feared the infamy that would follow the literal construction of his words, and wished to show that "not passion, but virtue," had inspired his poems. Too well did he foresee the clouds of petty scandal with which the gossip-mongers would obscure his fair fame.

And he wished also "to give to the world such teaching as could be given in no other way" (*Conv.*, i. 2). Therefore he gathered up the crumbs that had fallen from the table of the angels, and with them prepared his banquet. The book was consequently intended not merely "to help out the *Vita Nuova*" by explaining some of its allegories, but also to set forth, for the benefit of others, some of the treasures acquired "in the schools of the religious and the disputations of philosophers," because after self-culture

should come the enlightenment of others, and man should open out as it were like a rose, that can remain closed no longer, but must spread abroad the fragrance of his soul (*Conv.*, iv. 27).

Many parts of the *Convito*, indeed, seem like studies for the larger canvas of the *Commedia*. Here we have the prose which afterwards develops into poetry, and an idea hard to understand in the finished terseness of the poem we sometimes find in the *Convito* both amplified and explained. The *Convito* has been called the key to the *Commedia*, as it might be called the key to all Dante's works, in that it explains so carefully his conception of the literal and the allegorical, and the way in which he considered all books should be studied. He has made similar statements elsewhere, but in no other work has he given so many examples of the ruling passion of his age for the allegorical or mystical interpretation of the narratives of the Scriptures and of the poets.[1] St. Augustine wrote that "nothing can be more truly considered as the death of the soul than the holding by the letter;" and Perez, in *La Beatrice Svelata*, declares that "the allegorical form, because inherent in the nature of Christian ontology, reigned supreme

[1] Boccaccio says, in his *Genealogy of the Gods*, that "it is folly to believe that the poets concealed nothing under their outward words. . . . These illustrious men (Dante and Petrarch), who were nursed by the Muses and educated in the abodes of philosophy, did surely conceal a deep meaning in their verses. . . . I might instance the example of my own eclogue, but deem it more prudent to abstain." And in a letter to Jacopo Pizinge he says, "Dante's are no common and vulgar rhymes, as some assert; but, by a cunning device of his own, he writes so that the inward meaning is deeper than the outward covering."

over mediæval civilization and art in the time of Dante." We have only to look at the works of one of Dante's favourite authors, Richard of St. Victor, for instance (to whom he refers us in the letter to Can Grande), to see to what an extravagant pitch the passion for the allegorical had risen. To appreciate this tendency, however imperfectly, is to realize how simple a thing it would seem to Dante to make of his *beatitude* a living, breathing woman, with a local habitation and a name; to clothe her in the sacred colours of the Trinity; to give to her a father, a brother, and companions; to write of her eyes and her smile, and her refusal to salute him. Dante has declared that he knows no other worthy and noble form of poetry than the allegorical, and that they are dunces and vulgarians who do not understand its use. He himself seems to have been versed in every form of symbolism from the Kabbala down, and the mystic relations of numbers, the significance of colours, the secret properties of gems, the influences of the stars, the hidden meanings of the poets and the Scriptures, and even the mysteries concealed in their use of certain letters and words, were equally intelligible to him.

Besides the desire to share with others the mental and spiritual treasures he had accumulated, and to defend himself from the attacks of a censorious world, Dante also wished to plead the cause of his mother-tongue, so despised by the scholars of his time, and it seems most natural that the criticisms following the publication of the first cantos of the *Inferno* in

Italian should have inspired his defence of the Vulgate in the first (but last-written) book of the *Convito.* While conceding to the Latin the merits of greater dignity and precision, he prefers to use the Italian because it appeals to a larger audience, and thereby throws open the *Banquet* to the illiterate as well as the learned. Dante never contented himself with the fruitless rapture of his own visions, but ever recognized that they were his for the good of mankind. He carried with him through all his celestial journeyings a conviction of the importance of the command—

> "To the mortal world when thou returnest,
> This carry back" [1] (*Par.*, 21. 97);

while his continual prayer was—

> "O Power divine, now lend thyself to me,
> So that the shadow of the blessèd realm
> Stamped on my brain, I may make manifest."
> (*Par.*, 1. 22.)

We may see how the idea of the celestial banquet, the bread of the angels (of which he had gathered up some fallen crumbs to share with his fellow-men), had taken hold of his imagination, by reading the beginning of the twenty-fourth canto of the *Paradiso*, wherein Beatrice prays the beatified souls—

> "O company elect to the great supper
> Of the most blessèd Lamb, who feedeth you
> So that your wish is ever satisfied;
> If by the grace of God this man foretaste
> Something of that which falleth from your table

[1] In the quotations from the *Commedia* I have sometimes availed myself of Longfellow's translation, but in the passages from the other works have always made my own.

Before that death appoint to him his time;
Direct your thought to his immense desire,
And give him of that dew ye drinking are
Forever at the fount whence comes his thought."

If Dante had had time and opportunity to carry out his design for the *Banquet*, we should have had a most noble work; as it is, we have a noble fragment, and one of priceless value for the light it throws upon his other books (more especially the *Vita Nuova*), and upon the true nature of that Beatrice to whom his life was dedicated.

III.

ON THE NATURE OF BEATRICE.

The vexed question of the historical or allegorical character of Beatrice, as described in the trilogy of Dante, would require a volume for its proper treatment, and there is only space here for a brief and very inadequate summary of the principal arguments in the case. That she was a real person, the daughter of Folco Portinari, and the wife of Simone de' Bardi, that she was born about a year after Dante, was a married woman at the time of her father's death, and that she departed this life in June, 1290, are statements vouched for by Boccaccio, and accepted as historical facts by such early writers as Benvenuto da Imola, Filippo Villani, Manetti, Landino, and Bruni. But these all follow the story of Boccaccio, and of him Scartazzini (one of the most accomplished of Dante scholars) tells us that "we should have

wilfully to shut our eyes, not to see that the loquacious Certaldese is a thousand miles removed from the conscientious accuracy of the serious historian, and that if he did not invent the facts which he relates, to give weight to his declamations, as certain too rigorous critics have not hesitated to accuse him of doing, he certainly took no manner of care to verify the historical truth and exactness of the facts related by him" (*Vita di Dante*, p. 6). And Scartazzini might have added that the greater part of Boccaccio's story is a mere amplification of Dante's *Vita Nuova*, with the important difference that Dante nowhere identifies his Beatrice with any family of Florence, nor does he identify the city where she lived with Florence, but speaks simply of "that city in which God had placed my lady." The dates given by Dante in the *Vita Nuova* are all mystical combinations of the number 9, and it seems hardly probable that so many coincidences could have occurred in a real life.[1] And although we could readily believe in the love of a boy of nine for a playmate a little younger than himself (as in the case of Byron, for

[1] These mystical dates occur in almost all the writings of the mediæval poets, and the coincidences, if they are nothing more, are very striking. The Holy Week is usually the turning-point of their lives and of their loves. As Dante chooses it for the date of the *Commedia*, so does Boccaccio for the *Decamerone*, while he tells us that he is inspired to write his mystical *Filocopo* on Holy Saturday. He first meets Fiammetta in church (Aroux says at Santa Chiara, in Naples, on Holy Saturday); Petrarch meets Laura in the church of Santa Chiara, in Avignon, on Good Friday. Camoens, the troubadour Ausias March, and Luigi Martelli also fall in love on Good Friday, and their ladies all die on Good Friday, following the example of Petrarch's Laura. Many of these ladies, like Laura and Beatrice, expire at the first hour of the day (see G. Rossetti, *Influence of the Anti-papal Spirit*, etc.)

example), it is hard to believe that as the children lived so very near each other, and Dante says that he often "went in search of this youngest of the angels," that it could have been *nine years* after their first meeting before she ever spoke to him, and then only to salute him in the street as she passed by. And it is still more incredible that the love of a boy of eighteen, whose only outward recognition in the space of nine years was a passing salutation, should have needed the "screen" of a pretended love for two other ladies.[1] And if within the space of three years, at farthest, from their second meeting, Beatrice married Simone de' Bardi, why have we no allusion to a fact so tragic in its significance to even the most ideal of lovers? It is true that Dante mentions the father and the friends of Beatrice, but he also speaks of the *relatives* and friends of Philosophy, who were dear to him for her sake.

Not many days after the death of Beatrice's father, Dante himself falls ill, and on the *ninth* day of this illness the thought occurs to him that Beatrice herself must die some day; whereupon he has a vision of her as dead, and the details of this vision correspond in many respects with the description of her first appearance in *Purg.*, c. 30. Following this dream comes the curious passage already quoted, wherein he compares *Joan* who came before Beatrice to *John*, who came before the true Light, after which he makes a long digression to prove the necessary use by poets of an allegory in the form of a love-story.

[1] See *Vita Nuova*, §§ 5, 9.

His own narrative abruptly breaks off at the news of the death of Beatrice, at the *first hour*[1] of the *ninth* day of the *ninth* month (according to Syrian reckoning), of that year of the century (the thirteenth) in which the perfect number (ten) was *nine* times completed. And one reason why *nine* plays so conspicuous a part in her history is that all the nine heavens were in most perfect harmony at her birth, but "the more subtle and infallibly true reason is, that she was a miracle whose *sole root* was the miraculous Trinity." Does this sound like the genealogy of a mortal woman?

Here the story of the *Convito* comes in, to corroborate and help out that of the *Vita Nuova*. Having defined the method of his exposition as first literal and then allegorical, and having explained that the former is a *beautiful fiction*, while the latter is *the hidden truth*, Dante proceeds (Book ii. ch. 2) to tell us that two years after the death of Beatrice he first saw the *donna gentile*, the "lady at the window" (of § 36, *Vita Nuova*), who so comforted him by her pitying glances, that he thought of her as a person who pleased him only too well. This lady, Dante Rossetti

[1] In G. Rossetti's *Influence of the Anti-papal Spirit*, etc., vol. ii. p. 84, speaking of the deaths of both Beatrice and Laura at the first hour of the day, he says, "When the descendants of the Templars first see *light in the temple of light*, they call it 'the first hour of the day,' and when, after certain regulations made by them, that light is withdrawn, they call it the same; so that the first degree, and that called the *non plus ultra*, offer, the first the *coming*, and the last the *vanishing* light, and both at the *first hour of the day*. When they *see the light* they are said to fall in love with Madonna; when, by the interposition of the moon, it disappears, Madonna is said to die. Their 'day' includes Holy Thursday, Friday, and Saturday."

conjectures, may be meant for Gemma Donati (whom Dante married a year or two, perhaps,[1] after the death of Beatrice, and whose house stood between those of the Alighieri and the Portinari), because he believes "in the existence always of actual events, even where the allegorical superstructure has been raised by Dante himself."

Such was for a long time my own belief, but, after careful consideration of Dante's definition of the *literal*, I cannot find that it necessarily implies the *historical*. It is simply a narrative, however fabulous, under which he conceals his true thought (see Book ii. ch. 1). And the argument for the *necessity* of the existence of the actual Beatrice falls to the ground when we admit that "the literal" is often what the poet himself calls it—"a beautiful *fiction*." It is quite possible, nay, probable, that Dante may have fallen in love, at the age of nine, with a little neighbour who became to him "the idol of his youth, the darling of his manhood, and the most blessed memory of his age;" but I cannot see that we have any right to identify that ideal with Beatrice *Portinari* from any evidence furnished by Dante himself. Such identification rests solely upon the authority of that exceedingly untrustworthy romancer, Boccaccio.

The dates and the events of the *Vita Nuova*, I repeat, are too mystical to belong to real life, and we have no more right to identify "the lady of my *mind*" with Beatrice Portinari, than we have to identify "the

[1] The date of Dante's marriage is quite undetermined.

lady at the window" (who, Dante tells us, is Philosophy) with Gemma Donati, or the lady "screen" with Monna Vanna. Dante strikes his key-note in the very first section of the *Vita Nuova*, when he speaks of "the first time that appeared before my eyes the glorious lady *of my mind*," [1] implying a pre-existing conception. In fact, I cannot but feel that even if those were "actual events" upon which Dante raised "his allegorical superstructure," that that superstructure had become to him the all-important thing.

In the *Vita Nuova* and in the *Convito* the story is the same. Two years after the death of Beatrice, Dante found consolation in the charms of Philosophy, and for the next two years and a half devoted himself to scholastic learning. The works of Cicero and Boëthius were his constant study, and the *Consolations of Philosophy* of the latter seems to have suggested much of Dante's allegory. It is very certain that Dante owed far less to the various *Visions* and *Voyages* in Heaven and Hell that had preceded Him, than to the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, the *Æneid* of Virgil, Cicero's *Dream of Scipio* and his various essays, the *Consolations* of Boëthius, and the suggestive words of the Apocalypse, and the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon.

But, in spite of the charms of scholastic learning and the active life, the love of the first Beatrice was still latent in the soul of the poet; and as he proceeds

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[1] When Love says to him, "Your *beatitude* is already made manifest to you."

with the *Convito*, he shows us how beyond all science and all morality is the Divine Philosophy or Eternal Wisdom, which is full of all peace, and whose dwelling-place is that Quiet Heaven where the soul is at rest in God. So at the end of the *Vita Nuova*, after describing the same struggle of conflicting thoughts that he dwells upon in the *Convito*, he has a vision (about the *ninth* hour again) of the glorified Beatrice, clothed in that sanguine raiment in which she first appeared to his eyes, and she seemed to him as young as when he first saw her. And, remembering the past, he grieves to think that he has ever loved another, and all his thoughts return to their most noble Beatrice. And he has a vision of her receiving homage beyond "that sphere of widest range," that is, in the Quiet Heaven of Divine Wisdom and Peace. And after that he has another vision (of the *Commedia*), in which he sees things that make him resolve to say no more of this blessed one till he can more worthily treat of her.

If we interpret Dante's story after his own fashion, that fourfold manner in which he says all books "*may* be read and *ought* to be explained," it seems to me that we have, according to the *literal* sense, the story of a heart that consoles itself for the loss of its first love with the pity of another, and then repents its inconstancy, and returns to its original object of devotion. If we take it in the *allegorical* sense, we have the rivalry between the philosophy of the schools and theology. If we interpret it according to its *moral* significance, we have the opposition of the

active life and the contemplative life, the two beatitudes that Dante tells us are possible to man; and if we look for the *mystical* meaning, we have a soul that, having recognized its true blessedness in the Divine wisdom, loses itself for a time in the things of this world, shortly to repent, and to turn back to "that blessèd Beatrice, that gazeth continually upon the face of God," for she "is privy to the mysteries of the knowledge of God, and a lover of His works" (Wisd. viii. 4).

The Book of the Wisdom of Solomon (said by some authorities to have been written by Philo) is constantly quoted by Dante, and if we put together some of its verses, we shall see how closely he followed its suggestions in many passages of the *Commedia* as well as the *Convito*. We read, for instance, in the description of Wisdom—

"I loved her, and sought her out from my youth; I desired to make her my spouse, and I was a lover of her beauty.

"Therefore I purposed to take her to live with me, knowing that she would be a counsellor of good things, and a comfort in cares and grief.

"Moreover, by means of her I shall obtain immortality, and leave behind me an everlasting memorial to them that come after me" (ch. viii. 2, 9, 13).

"What hath pride profited us? or what good hath riches with our vaunting brought us?

"All these things are past away like a shadow, . . and as when a bird hath flown through the air" (ch. v. 8, 9, 11).

"Wherefore I called upon God, and the spirit of Wisdom came to me.

"I preferred her before sceptres and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her.

"For she is the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty.

"For she is the brightness of the everlasting Light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of His goodness.

"And in all ages, entering into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God and prophets.

"For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of the stars: being compared with the light, she is found before it" (ch. vii. 7, 8, 25–27, 29).

"And Wisdom knoweth thy works, and was present when Thou madest the world" (ch. ix. 9).

"Before the fair flowers were seen, or ever the motive powers were established, before the innumerable multitude of angels were gathered together" (2 Esdras vi. 3).

"Wherefore," says Dante (*Conv.*, iii. 14), "it is written of this eternal Love which is Wisdom, *He created me from the beginning before the world, and I shall never fail* (Ecclus. xxiv. 9). And in the Proverbs of Solomon (viii. 23) she, Wisdom, says, *I was set up from everlasting.* And in the beginning of the Gospel of John her eternity is openly declared."

From these and many other passages quoted or assimilated by Dante, we see the deep hold that the Gnostic ideas had taken upon his mind, and the close resemblance that his "Wisdom" (identified here and

in many other places with the Logos and the Second Person of the Trinity) bears to that spiritual intuition, or secret knowledge of Divine things, common to mystics of all ages.[1] She is identical with the *Active*

[1] It has been supposed by G. Rossetti, Aroux, and others that Dante was a member of one of the heretical sects of the day, and that his great poem, rightly interpreted, is one long attack upon the Roman Catholic Church and the papal supremacy. The Catharists (from whom sprang the Albigenses and the Waldensians) in the beginning, however, strenuously repudiated the charge of heresy, and protested only against the abuses of the Church. They recognized it in its early days as the Church of Christ, and dated its corruption from that Sylvester whom they considered to be "the man of sin" mentioned in 2 Thess. v. 3. With the morals were corrupted also the doctrines of the Church, and the allegories of the New Testament came to be taken too literally. They denounced the worship of images, and believed the house of God to be in the hearts of believers rather than in gorgeous churches. They utterly condemned riches, honours, and ambition, as leading to war, which they held in abhorrence. To the Roman Catholic traditions they opposed the New Testament and that alone, and to the vices of the Church a pure and ascetic life. The *Patarini* also, another leading sect of the day, neither considered themselves, nor really were, heretics, asserting that their movement was directed originally solely against the marriages and luxurious living of the priests.

The religion of the Templars (with whom also Dante is said to have been connected) was supposed to be a form of Gnosticism, which Loiseleur (in his *Doctrine Secrète des Templiers*) declares to be closely related to the creed of the "Euchètes" or "Luciferians;" but Wilcke (in his *Geschichte des Tempelherrnordens*) says it is useless to try to connect the Templars with any sect of the time. They were simply free-thinking men of the world. Their system of doctrine was the outcome of the liberalizing enlightenment, the religious doubt, and the religious indifference of a knightly order of nobles. Rightly considered, their secret doctrine was nothing more than Protestantism in general and rationalism in particular (Wilcke, *lib. cit.*, vol. iii. pp. 311, *et seq.*).

That Dante was deeply imbued with certain Gnostic ideas, and that he was fully alive to all the abuses existing in the Church as he knew it, we have every evidence; but there is no proof in the *Commedia* or the *Convito* that he rejected any of its principal dogmas, or that he considered himself a heretic, any more than the Catharists and Patarins of the day considered themselves as heretics. But it was impossible that so far-seeing and subtle a genius could be constrained to follow exactly any prescribed path; he gloried in making for himself in politics "a party of his own," and his religion, while in the main that of the Church in which he was baptized, was far from being that of the priests who baptized him.

Intelligence of the scholiasts, and with the *Gnosis* of the Hermetic philosophers. We read in *Hermes Trismegistus* (said by Bunsen to have been finished at the latest 670 B.C., and by others assigned to a far earlier date) that "God did not create all men with intelligence" (that is, spiritual insight), "because He wished to hold it before men's souls as a prize to strive for. He filled a great bowl with it, and sent it by a messenger, ordering him to cry to the hearts of men, 'Baptize ye, ye who have the power, in the bowl; ye who believe that you will return to Him who has sent it, ye who know wherefore you are born!' And those who answered the call, and were baptized in this intelligence, these possess the *Gnosis*, and have become the initiated of the spirit, the perfect men. Those who did not understand the call, possess reason but not intelligence, and know not wherefore and by whom they were formed. Composed alone of passions and desires, they do not admire that which is worthy to be contemplated, but give themselves up to the pleasures and appetites of the body, and believe that this is the end of man. But those who have received the gift of God, these are immortal, and no longer mortal. Disdaining all things, corporeal and incorporeal, they aspire towards the One and the Only. This is the wisdom of the spirit, to contemplate Divine things and to know God. This is the blessing of the Divine bowl."[1]

So Dante says, "If it happen that by the purity of

[1] From the French of *Hermes Trismegiste*, Louis Ménard.

the receiving soul the intellectual virtue be absolutely separate and free from any corporeal shadow, then the Divine goodness multiplies in that soul, as in a thing worthy to receive it; and further, it multiplies in the soul endowed with this intelligence according to her capacity of reception. . . . And in such a soul is her own virtue, and the intellectual, and the Divine. . . . And some are of opinion that if all these powers should co-operate in the production of a soul according to their most favourable disposition, the Deity would descend upon that soul in such fulness that it would be almost another God incarnate" (*Conv.*, iv. 21).

If we open the *Consolations of Philosophy*, by Boëthius, we find many striking resemblances to the allegory of Dante. Boëthius, wretched and in prison, is lamenting his exile and his misfortunes, when a lady of majestic presence suddenly appears at his bedside. She has glowing eyes, and a stature that is at one moment that of ordinary men, and the next rises to the highest heavens. Her garment, woven by her own hands, of the finest indissoluble threads has inscribed upon its lowest edge an *alpha*, upon its highest an *omega*, and between the two is embroidered a ladder of many degrees. But her robe is torn, and violent hands have rent away the fragments. In one hand she carries a sceptre, in the other some books. She expels the muses of poetry from the philosopher's cell, saying that, under the guise of medicines, they have given him sweet poisons. "You have taken from me no common man," she says to them, "but

this my faithful one, whom I believed to be in Greece, rapt in the study of Plato and Aristotle. Depart from him, ye sirens,[1] whose sweetness hath brought him nigh to death." And these having left him, she seats herself by his bedside.

"Dost thou know me?" she says to him. "It is in sooth I,[2] who nourished thee, and who armed thee with such weapons that, hadst thou not thrown them down, would have defended thee from every assault." Whereupon Boëthius wept bitterly, and she dried his eyes with the hem of her robe.

This lady is Philosophy, who never abandons her faithful ones. She requires from her disciple a full confession,[3] and hearing how he laments the lost favours of Fortune,[4] his exile and his imprisonment, sets herself to discredit this rival, to show him how worthless are her favours and herself. She tells him that man's true fatherland is the contemplation of immortal and divine things, and that they alone should be called exiles who are shut out from this perfection, seeing that the ultimate end of man is the

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[1] "Another time,
Hearing *the Sirens*, thou may'st be more strong."
(*Purg.*, 31. 44.)

[2] "Look at me well; in sooth I'm Beatrice!
. . . . . .
For some time I sustained him with my gaze,
And kept my youthful eyes fixed on his own,
And led him with me, turned in the right way."
(*Purg.*, 30. 73, 121–123.)

[3] "To such a charge
Thine own confession needs must be conjoined."
(*Purg.*, 31. 5.)

[4] Compare with this the speech of Beatrice (*Inf.*, 2. 61), where she calls Dante "a friend of mine, and not the friend of Fortune."

supreme beatitude of the contemplative life, and to that end he should dedicate himself entirely. Therefore she who has loved him from his earliest years, now that she has told him wherein consists his true beatitude, will point out to him—first indicating the things he should avoid—the path which will lead him back to it; and will replume the wings of his mind so that he may be enabled to soar to "la somma Beatrice." There, restored to health and safety, and untroubled, made one of the army of heaven, he will contemplate the law by which the King of kings rules the universe, and will see how, for the individual as for the race, the highest beatitude is resolved into the Unity.

When Beatrice first appears to Dante in Purgatory, she says to him, "Look at me well; I am in sooth Beatrice! How didst thou deign (being lost in the pride of philosophy) to come unto this mount[1] where man is happy? Not only by the influence of the stars at his birth," she continues, addressing her attendant virtues, "did this man receive great intellectual power, but also by the special gift of Divine grace did he become such in his new life (*sua vita nuova*) that everything good was possible to him. I revealed myself to him in his youth, and for some time led him with me in the right way, but when I stood upon the threshold of my second age and

[1] "Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord? . . . He who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity" (Ps. xxiv. 3, 4). The summit of the Mount of Purgatory was the terrestrial Paradise, explained by the Fathers of the Church as the contemplative life.

changed life,[1] he left me, and gave himself to another. As I ascended from flesh to spirit, and beauty and virtue increased in me, I became less dear to him, and he turned to pursue those false images of good that never fulfil their promises. Nor was he affected by the inspiration of the visions that I sent him, but fell so low that I was obliged to show him the realm of the lost. The law of justice would be broken should he pass Lethe without tears and repentance." And then, addressing herself directly to the poet, she demands his confession that this charge is true, and asks him what impediments he found while following those desires inspired by her (which led him to love that Good wherein aspiration ceases) that caused him to lose hope, or what advantages in any other good that he should turn to it? And the poet, weeping, says that the things of this world, with their false images of pleasure, led him astray as soon as her countenance was hidden from him. Then Beatrice tells him that her "buried flesh" should have led him in the opposite direction; for neither art nor nature ever gave him so much pleasure as her fair members now dispersed in earth.

In the *Convito* (iii. 14, 15) Dante tells us that the soul of Divine Philosophy is love, and the *beauty of her body* is morality, "because as the beauty of the body

[1] The *Ottimo* explains this passage to mean that when Dante had come to the more difficult part of the study of theology (or the science of Divine things), when it passed from the things of the flesh to the things of the spirit, that he abandoned it, and gave himself up to the delights of philosophy and poetry, which are called vain and false like the Sirens. And the old commentator refers us to the passage in Boëthius already quoted.

results from the proper ordering of its members, so the beauty of wisdom, which is the body of philosophy, results from that ordering of the moral virtues which makes us take a sensible delight in them." Barlow (*Hist. Contributions to the Study of Dante*), in commenting upon this passage of the *Purgatorio*, says, "The *Donna* of the *Vita Nuova*, of the *Convito*, and of the *Divina Commedia* is one and the same, only differently treated. In the first we have the Aristotelian *form* of Beatrice treated of, that is, *Amore;* in the second we have the *beauty* of Beatrice treated of, that is, *Morality;* in the third we have the *substance* of Beatrice treated of, *il soggetto materiale*, or *Sapienza*, in which the real nature of Dante's *Donna* is made manifest."

The two passages of the *Purgatorio* already quoted (*Purg.*, 30. 127–130, and 31. 47–51), where Beatrice speaks of her "second age" and of her "buried flesh," have always been the stronghold of those who believe in the historical Beatrice; but if we are to accept these lines in their literal sense, they carry us entirely too far, and convey a meaning which is surely other than Dante's. In the *Vita Nuova* the whole story of his intercourse with Beatrice is limited to his *seeing* her once at the age of nine (§ 2), to her speaking to him nine years afterwards, as she passed him in the street (§ 3), and to his seeing her once across a church (§ 5), after which, hearing of his love for "the lady who served him as a screen" on that occasion, she refuses to salute him (§ 10), and even joins with her companions in making a jest of him when he

meets her once more at a wedding feast (§ 14); while Dante himself assures us, "to prevent every vicious thought," that the end of his desires was the salutation of his lady, "which consisted of two acts of her mouth—her smile and her speech" (§ 19). Is it not grossly inconsistent with this poetic ideal, for that Beatrice who went through life so clothed upon with maidenly modesty, to tell her lover when she first meets him in the spirit-world—a lover the end of whose desires was her smile of greeting—that her *fair body* had given him more pleasure than anything in art or nature, and that the memory of that "buried flesh" should have kept him insensible to all other attractions, for when "the highest of all pleasures" was taken from him by her death, what mortal thing was there to awake desire? (*Purg.*, 31. 48–54). She had told him just before that the desire for her led him to love that Good beyond which there is nothing to aspire to; but could love of the body, however fair, inspire that love of God that Dante describes over and over again as "our highest beatitude"?

It seems to me impossible to take the Beatrice of the *Vita Nuova* for an historical reality and the Beatrice of the *Commedia* for an allegory (as many have done), because the two are so closely connected; in fact, as Giuliani says (though he is, nevertheless, a realist), comparing § 29, *Vita Nuova*, and *Par.*, 32. 7, where Beatrice is placed under the standard of the Virgin, "whoever notices all these minute relations, and, indeed, the perfect accordance of the *Vita Nuova*, the *Commedia*, and all the other works of Dante, must

be forced, while he admires, to recognize ever the same mind in the architect of such numerous and varied works." And not only the same mind, but the same intention.

Perez identifies Beatrice with the Active Intelligence (which he identifies with Wisdom, or the Divine Light), and his argument may be briefly summed up thus. Dante is said by Beatrice (*Purg.*, 30. 109, *et seq.*) to be endowed with all possible intellectual power; not only by the influence of the stars at his birth, but by the special gift of Divine grace, which is that seed of felicity that is the beginning of all good in man (*Conv.*, iv. 21). The fruit which should be produced from this seed is the blessedness which follows the use of the soul in contemplation (ibid. 22). The angel at the sepulchre says to those who have wandered from the true way—that is, to all who have sought for happiness in *the active life*—that it is not there, but that it goeth before them into *speculation*, or the contemplative life. Now, if (as Dante has said elsewhere) "the highest Good, beyond which there is nothing to aspire to," is the use of our intellect in speculation;[1] if the false pleasures of present things make up the beatitude that the schools of philosophy are seeking in this world—where they will never find it; if Beatrice asserts that she guided him in his youth to this highest Good; and if, as we have seen, the intellect cannot act unless

[1] The "use of intellect in speculation," is the same thing (with Dante) as the absorption of the soul in the contemplation of the Divine, and *not* an intellectual exercise.

the *active Intelligence* enlighten it; what else can Beatrice be, but that Active Intelligence (or Divine Wisdom), the enlightener of the *possible intellect* (or human understanding), which, united to the latter, becomes the *Beatrice beata?* (the blessed or glorified Beatrice).

Dante's *beatitude had preceded him into speculation*, and he finds her on the summit of "the Mount Delectable, which is the source and cause of every joy" (*Inf.*, I. 77), whence, by the power of his lady's eyes, he is lifted to travel through the heavens (*Par.*, 17. 113). So Richard of St. Victor says, "Man must ascend this mountain if he would comprehend those things which are above human senses. Its ascent leads to the knowledge of one's self; that which happens on the summit leads to the knowledge of God. He who ascends the mountain, who knows himself as he is, will know what he should be. The mind that never rises to the knowledge of itself, can it ever soar upon the wings of contemplation to that which is above itself? So long as it spends itself in manifold desires, so long as by many ways of thought it wanders here and there, it cannot ascend to contemplation."

"And thus it appears," says Dante (*Conv.*, iv. 22), "that our beatitude, that is, this felicity of which we are speaking, we may first find imperfectly in the active life, that is, in the exercise of the moral virtues, and then almost perfectly in the contemplative life, that is, in the exercise of the intellectual virtues; which two operations are unimpeded and

most direct ways to lead us to the supreme beatitude that cannot be obtained here below."

The story of Dante's inner life (*la vita nuova*, or *regenerate* life), as told in the great trilogy of his works, appears to be this—that from his early boyhood he had felt a strong love for the contemplative life (or study of Divine Wisdom); that amid the distractions of the active life, the pursuits of the world, the cares of the state and the family, the duties of the soldier, the studies of the artist and the scientist,[1] this heavenly "giver of blessings," this Divine beatitude, passed away from him. Then came the consolations of scholastic philosophy, with "its false images of good," in whose attractions his whole soul was for a time absorbed, until at last the vision of the higher life, as he had seen it when a boy, came back to him, and he returned to the love of Divine Wisdom, who revealed to him first her *eyes*, "those demonstrations wherein one sees the truth with the greatest certitude," and then her "second beauty," her *smile*, "through which the inner light of Wisdom shines as without any veil;" for in these two we feel that highest pleasure of beatitude which is the greatest joy of Paradise[2] (*Conv.*, iii. 15).

[1] We know that Dante fought in the battle of Campaldino, June 11, 1289, and at the siege of the castle of Caprona, in August of the same year. We know, also, that he had studied music and drawing as well as poetry and philosophy; that he was enrolled in the sixth of the seven higher professions, that of the physicians and apothecaries, probably in 1295, in which year he was also made a member of the Special Counsel of Florence; and that he married some time between 1292 and 1296, the majority of biographers assigning the earlier date to this event. He had certainly three children, probably seven.

[2] In the *Convito*, as well as in the *Commedia*, says Witte (in his

IV.

TO THE STUDENT OF DANTE.

No one can feel more keenly than myself the inadequacy of this brief sketch of the great scheme of Dante, and I offer it simply as a suggestion to students of his works. The best way to understand him—if I may be permitted to recommend to others the course I have found advantageous—is, first, to acquire a thorough knowledge of his language (which can only be properly done by several years' residence in Italy, and intercourse with intelligent Italians); second, to read at least the three most important works of Dante several times before reading his commentators; third, to get a general idea of the history, philosophy, and poetry of his time (including Gnostic and mystic ideas), and also of the books he loved and studied, especially the *Metaphysics* and *Ethics* of Aristotle, the essays of Plato and Cicero, those books of the Bible and the Apocrypha (the Gospel of John and the Apocalypse, Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon) from which he drew so much of his inspiration; and fourth, *after* having formed some views of your own, to read the most important of the commentators. I subjoin a list of

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Dante's Lyrische Gedichte), Dante means to show his progress from the philosophy which is of the intellect alone, to that spiritual wisdom which is one with God Himself. To the former merely intellectual phase Witte thinks the poet refers in the words addressed to Forese Donati (*Purg.*, 23. 116), and in his confession to Beatrice.

a few of the books that I have found especially helpful, though most widely diverse in their views.

Introductory.

Introduction to the Study of Dante. J. A. Symonds.
The Shadow of Dante. Maria F. Rossetti.
Life and Times of Dante. Count Balbo.
Dante, an Essay: "Among my Books," 2nd series. J. R. Lowell.
Hist. Contrib. to the Study of Dante. H. C. Barlow.
Dante, ou la Phil. Cath. au 13ieme siècle. Ozanam.
Dante, et les origines de la litt. ital. Fauriel.
Influence of the Anti-papal Spirit, etc. G. Rossetti.
Dante and his Circle. Dante G. Rossetti.
L'eresia nel medio-evo. Tocco.
Dante hérétique, etc. Aroux.
Histoire critique du Gnosticisme. Matter.
Hours with the Mystics. Vaughan.
La Beatrice Svelata. Perez.
Dante e le Opere. Scartazzini. (*Translated by Thomas Davidson.*)
Vocabolario Dantesco. Louis Blanc.

The "Commedia."

La Divina Commedia. Leipsic ed. Scartazzini.
The Divine Comedy. Longfellow.
Die Idee der Göttliche Komödie. Hugo Delff.
Dante und die Göttliche Komödie. Hugo Delff.
Les sources poétiques de la D. C. Ozanam.

The "Convito."

Il Convito commentata da. Giuliani.
Il Convito commentata da. Fraticelli.
Il Convito, sua cronologia, etc. Fran. Selmi.

The "Vita Nuova."

The Italian editions of Fraticelli and Giuliani.
La Vita Nuova e la Fiammetta. R. Renier.
Dante's Lyrische Gedichte. Karl Witte.
Intorno all' Epoca della V. N. Ant. Lubin.

In conclusion, I wish to express my gratitude to the many friends in Rome who have helped me with their counsel and their encouragement, and most especially to the Maestro Alessandro Costa for his patient revision of the translation, and to Robert Sinclair, Esq., for his kindness in allowing me the use of his valuable library.

ROME, *March*, 1888.

THE BANQUET.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

1. As the Philosopher[1] has said at the beginning of the first philosophy,[2] all men naturally desire to know.[3] The reason of this may be that everything, by an impulse of its own nature, tends towards its perfection;[4] therefore, since knowledge is the ultimate perfection of our soul, in which consists our ultimate felicity, we are all by nature subject to this desire. Nevertheless, many are deprived of this most noble perfection by divers causes, which, acting upon man both from within and from without, remove him from the estate of knowledge.

2. Within him may exist two kinds of defects or

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[1] Aristotle. [2] Metaphysics.

[3] "The natural thirst that ne'er is satisfied."
(*Purg.*, 21. 1; see also *Conv.*, iii. 11, par. 2.)

[4] "All natures . . . move onward unto ports diverse."
(*Par.*, 1. 110.)
(See also the motto of Rabelais, "All things move towards their end.")

hindrances—the one appertaining to the body, the other to the soul. Of the body are such organic defects as prevent it from receiving anything; as with the deaf, the dumb, and their like. The defective *soul* is that in which evil reigns, so that it is made a follower of vicious pleasures, and is thereby so deluded that through them all things tend to vileness.

3. From without, in a similar way, we may observe two causes of hindrance, one of which is the promoter of many encumbrances, the other of sloth. The first comprises those cares of the family and the state with which most men are fittingly absorbed, so that indulgence in speculation[1] is denied them. The other is the fault of the place where the person is born and bred, which may be not only devoid of all learning, but also of all studious persons.

4. The first of [each of] these two causes, that is the first internal and the first external impediment,[2] are not deserving of blame, but rather are worthy of excuse and pardon; the two others[3] (at least, more especially the [first] one) are worthy of blame and abomination. Manifest is it, therefore, to him who considereth well, that there are but few who can attain to that estate desired of all,[4] and that almost innumerable are the impeded ones, who are for ever famishing for this food. Oh, blessed are the few that

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[1] Or the contemplative life.

[2] (1) Physical imperfection; (2) absorption in family and civic cares.

[3] (1) Vice; and (2) the sloth arising from want of external stimulus.

[4] "Ye were not made to live like unto brutes,
But for pursuit of virtue and of knowledge."
(*Inf.*, 26. 119.)

are seated at the table where the bread of the angels[1] is eaten; and miserable are they who feed in common with the sheep![2] But because every man is by nature a friend to every other man, and because every friend is grieved by the necessity of him he loves; so they who are fed at so lofty a table are not without compassion towards them whom they see wandering in the pastures of the brutes, and feeding upon grass and acorns. And because compassion is the mother of beneficence, therefore ever liberally do they who know[3] share of their great riches with the truly poor, and are like a living fountain whose waters cool that thirst of nature[4] before named. And I, therefore (who do not sit at the blessed table, but have fled from the pasture of the herd,[5] and at the feet of them who are seated there,[6] gather up

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[1] "The food that, while
It satisfies us, makes us hunger for it."
(*Purg.*, 31. 128.)

"The bread of the angels, upon which
One liveth here and grows not sated by it."
(*Par.*, 2. 11.)

"The Truth, in which all intellect finds rest."
(*Par.*, 28. 108.)

"The *bread of the angels*," says Vellutello, following St. Thomas Aquinas, "is solely the vision of God, upon which these angels are nurtured, and upon which bread we may live here, it being the spiritual food of the contemplative" (and see Book of Wisdom xvi. 20).

[2] "Be ye as men, and not as silly sheep!"
(*Par.*, 5. 80.)

[3] "The master of they who know."
(*Inf.*, 4. 131.)

[4] See note 3, p. 1.

[5] "For thee he issued from the vulgar herd."
(*Inf.*, 2. 105.)

[6] "O company elect to the great supper
Of the most blessèd Lamb, who feedeth you
So that your wish is ever satisfied!"
(*Par.*, 24. 1.)

what they let fall), knowing the miserable life of those whom I have left behind me, and moved to mercy by the sweetness of that which I have gained little by little, while not forgetting myself, have reserved for these wretched ones something which I have already and for some time held before their eyes,[1] making them thereby all the more desirous of it.[2] Therefore, wishing now to prepare the table[3] for them, I intend to make a general banquet out of that which I have shown them, including the bread necessary to such a feast, without which they could not eat of this banquet—bread worthy of such food, [which I do not intend shall be administered in vain].[4]

5. But I wish no one to present himself at this banquet whose organs are defective, who may lack teeth, or tongue, or palate; nor any one addicted to evil ways; because his stomach is filled with contrary and venomous humours, so that it could not tolerate my food. But come whosoever will, who, though impeded by family or civic cares, still feels the hunger of humanity, and let him seat himself at the

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[1] Pederzini thinks this refers to the *Vita Nuova*, and I am inclined to agree with him, this book "being intended to help out the other" (see par. 7); but Fraticelli considers that it refers to the *Canzoni*.

[2] "Largess of the food
For which he had given me largess of desire."
(*Inf.*, 14. 92.)

"The great fast
Which for so long hath kept me still in hunger."
(*Par.*, 19. 25.)

[3] The verb *apparecchiare*, "to prepare," still has in Tuscany this special meaning, "to set a table" (Giuliani).

[4] Giuliani omits the words in brackets as an interpolation.

table with others of similar case, and let all who have remained thus an-hungered through sloth, place themselves at the feet of the first ones, as not worthy of a higher seat; and let both these and those partake of my food, together with the bread which I will make them to enjoy and to digest.

6. The meats of this banquet shall be set forth in fourteen courses; that is, in fourteen canzoni,[1] composed of Love as well as of Virtue; the which without this bread might be darkened by some obscurity, so that for many their beauty[2] would please rather than their worth; but this bread, that is, this present exposition, shall be the light that shall bring out every shade of their meaning.

7. And if the present work, which is called *The Banquet* (and I wish it truly to be one), is treated in a more masculine manner than the *Vita Nuova*, nevertheless, I do not intend in any way to derogate from that, but rather to make this book help out the other; seeing that in all reason the one should be fervent and passionate, the other temperate and manly. For the speech and actions of one age ought to differ from those of another; because certain ways are suitable to and praiseworthy in one age, which are unfitting and blameworthy in another, as shall be hereafter shown with appropriate reasoning in the Fourth Book of this work. For in the former[3] I spoke when at the entrance of my youth, but in this

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[1] Only three were ever written, or at least ever commentated by their author.

[2] Their *beauty* being in the letter, their *worth* in their allegorical meaning.

[3] The *Vita Nuova.*

one after that had already gone by.[1] And inasmuch as my true meaning was other than that which the aforesaid canzoni outwardly convey, I intend to explain their allegorical meaning after their literal significance; so that the one and the other may give flavour to this feast for those who are invited thereto; all of whom I pray, should the banquet not prove as splendid as befits its announcement, to impute its defects, not to my will, but to my [lack of] ability; because my desire is for that precious and perfect liberality which here followeth.[2]

CHAPTER II.

1. AT the beginning of every well-ordered banquet the servants are wont to take the bread given out for it, and cleanse it from every speck, and so I, who in the present writing take their place, wish first of all to free from two specks this explanation, that represents the bread of my feast. Firstly, any speaking of one's self seems unlawful; secondly, too much profundity[3] in an explanation seems unreasonable. And the unlawful and the unreasonable are removed by the knife of my judgment after this manner.

2. The rhetoricians will not allow any one to speak of himself unnecessarily.[4] And this is why one should

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[1] Dante defines *youth* as the period from the twenty-fifth to the forty-fifth year (see *Conv.*, iv. 24, par. 3).

[2] That is, that perfection of liberality which is described in ch. 8 of this book.

[3] Because it leads to obscurity.

[4] The only time that Dante mentions his own name in the *Commedia* is in *Purg.*, 33. 55; though he speaks of his birth, his exile, and the hospitality extended to him in several other places.

avoid it; because no one can be spoken of without having either praise or blame imputed to him by the speaker, which two reasons make it unfitting for any to speak of himself. And to dispel a doubt which arises here, I would say that to blame is worse than to praise, although neither should be done.

3. The reason is that whatever thing is inherently worthy of blame, is more vile than that which is so by accident [*per accidens*]. To disparage one's self is in itself blameworthy, because it is in secret that a man should reveal his fault to his friend, and no one is a greater friend to a man than himself; therefore in the chamber of his own thoughts[1] he should reprove himself for his faults, and weep over them, and not openly. Again, a man is not usually brought to shame for want of knowledge or of power to conduct himself well, but always for want of will to do so, because by our own will or want of will is estimated our goodness or our wickedness.[2] And, therefore, he who blames himself proves that he recognizes his fault, and proves himself to be not good; wherefore one should avoid speaking of himself with blame.[3]

4. Praise of one's self should be avoided as evil *per accidens*, inasmuch as the praises one gives himself imply mostly blame; they are praises in words, but their inward substance is found to be blame by him

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[1] See *Vita Nuova*, § 11.

[2] "Innate within you is the power that counsels,

. . . . . .

This is the principle from which is taken
Occasion of desert in you, according
As good or evil loves ye gather up."
(*Purg.*, 18. 62–65.)

[3] "To praise one's self is vain; to vituperate is foolish" (Aristotle).

that searcheth it out. For words are made to explain what we do not know. Therefore he who praises himself shows that he thinks himself not valued; which would not happen but from an uneasy conscience, which he betrays by his self-praises, and by this betrayal blames himself.

5. And again, self-praise and self-blame should be equally avoided for the same reason, as being false testimony; because there is no man who can be a just and accurate measurer of himself, so deceptive is his self-love.[1] And thus it happens that each man judges by the measures of the dishonest merchant, who sells by one and buys by another; he estimates his evil by the long measure, and by the short measure his good; so that the number and quantity and weight of the good seem to him more than if it had been measured honestly, and that of the evil less. Therefore, in speaking of one's self either with praise or the reverse, one speaks falsely, either in respect of the thing spoken of or in respect of one's manner of judging, so that both are false. And moreover, seeing that consent is an acknowledgment, he does an evil thing who praises or blames any one in his presence; because that other can neither accept nor refuse [such praise or blame] without falling into the error of praising or blaming himself; save in the case of deserved correction (which cannot be [given] without [speaking in] reproof of the fault to be corrected); and save in the case of deserved honour and commendation, which necessitate the mention of virtuous deeds, and of honours virtuously acquired.

[1] Literally, "his charity to himself" (see *Inf.*, 14. 1), "Because the charity of my native place constrained me.")

6. Nevertheless, returning to the principal topic, I say (as I have indicated above) that in cases of necessity it is allowable to speak of one's self. And among other such cases, two are more especially evident: one is when some great infamy or danger cannot be otherwise avoided; and then it is allowable for the reason that to choose of two roads the less wretched is almost equivalent to taking a good one. And this necessity it was that moved Boëthius [1] to speak of himself, in order that, under pretext of consolation, he might defend himself against the perpetual infamy of his exile, showing how unjust it was, and since no other apologist came forward. The other case is, when by speaking of one's self the greatest good may come to others by the teaching therein conveyed; and this reason moved [St.]

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[1] Anicius Manlius Severinus Boëthius, Roman senator and philosopher in the time of Theodoric the Goth. Born about A.D. 470, and put to death in 524 or 525. He inherited the wealth and honours of the Anician family, and the appellation of Manlius asserted his descent from a race of consuls and dictators. Not satisfied with the schools of Rome, he is said to have spent eighteen laborious years in Athens. After his return to Rome, he continued to prosecute his studies in every known branch of literature and science. He was made consul in 510, but about the year 524, being suspected of a plot to free Rome from the dominion of the Goths, he was arrested by Theodoric and imprisoned in the tower of Pavia, where he wrote his immortal work on the *Consolations of Philosophy* during the six months of his captivity. He was put to death with horrible tortures, and buried at Pavia, his remains being afterwards transferred by the Emperor Otho to the church of San Pietro, in Cield'oro (*Cieldauro*) in that place (see Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ch. xxxix.).

> "The sainted soul, that the world's fallacy
> Makes manifest to whoso listeneth well,
> The body whence 'twas hunted forth is lying
> Down in Cieldauro, and from martyrdom
> And banishment that soul came to this peace."
> (*Par.*, 10. 125.)

Augustine,[1] in his *Confessions*, to speak of himself; since in the course of his life, which was from bad to good, and from good to better, and from better to best, he set forth an example and instruction, to which we could have had no such true testimony.

7. Wherefore, if the one and the other of these reasons excuse me, the bread of this my wheat is cleansed of its first speck. I am moved by the fear of infamy, and I am moved by the desire of setting forth certain teachings, which truly no other can give; I fear the infamy of being held subject to such passion as those who read the above-named canzoni will consider possessed me; the which infamy will be entirely removed by my speaking now of myself, and showing that it was not passion, but virtue, which was their moving cause. I intend also to show the true meaning of those [canzoni] which could be understood by none unless I told it, because it is hidden under the figure of an allegory; and this will not only give delight in the hearing, but a subtle training in this way of speaking, and in this way of understanding other writings.

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[1] St. Augustine is mentioned in *Par.*, 10. 120, and again in *Par.*, 32. 35, where he is put with St. Francis and St. Benedict as continuing the work of St. John the Baptist. St. Augustine was born at Tajelt, in Africa, in A.D. 354, of a pagan father and a Christian mother—that St. Monica who has become almost the type of sainted mothers. His interest in serious studies was first awakened in his nineteenth year by Cicero's *Hortensius*. He first professed Manicheism, but was converted by Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, in his thirtieth year. He became Bishop of Hippo, where he died, during its siege by the Vandals, in 430.

CHAPTER III.

1. WORTHY of much reprehension is that thing whose purpose is to take away some defect, but which rather induces it; as one who should be sent to stop a quarrel, and, before doing so, should begin another. And whereas my bread is cleansed on the one side, it behoves me now to cleanse it on the other, that I may avoid this reproach; that my writing, which may almost be called a *Commentary*, is intended to remedy the defect[1] of the above-named canzoni, and is itself, perhaps, in parts somewhat difficult; which difficulty, to avoid a greater evil, and not from ignorance, is here intentional. Ah! had it but pleased the Dispenser of the universe that the cause of my excuse[2] need never have existed; that neither others had injured me, nor that I had suffered this pain—the pain, I say, of exile and poverty.[3] Since it pleased the citizens of the fairest and most famous daughter of Rome, Florence,[4] to cast me forth from

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[1] That is, their obscurity. [2] The infamy of his exile.

[3] In Dante's *Epistle to the Nephews of Count Alessandro da Romena* he speaks of himself as hunted forth from his country and living in unmerited exile. See also the prophecy of Cacciagnida—

> "Thou shalt abandon everything beloved
> Most tenderly, and this the arrow is
> That first the bow of banishment shoots forth."
> (*Par.*, 17. 55-58.)

[4] "A native of that noble land."
(*Inf.*, 10. 26.)

"From the fair sheep-fold where a lamb I slumbered."
(*Par.*, 25. 5.)

In Dante's canzone beginning, "Since now it seems I must lament me, love," he says—

her most sweet bosom (wherein I was born and nourished up to the climax of my life,[1] and wherein, by their good leave, I long with all my heart to rest my weary soul, and to end the days allotted to me), through almost every part where her language is spoken I have wandered, a pilgrim, almost a beggar,[2] displaying against my will the wounds of fortune, which are often wont to be imputed unjustly to the wounded one himself.[3] Truly have I been a vessel without sail and without rudder, borne to divers ports and shores and havens by the dry wind that blows from dolorous poverty; and have appeared vile in the eyes of many who, perhaps, through some fame of me, had imagined me in other guise; in whose consideration, not only did I in person suffer abasement, but all my work became of less account, that already done as well as that yet to do. The reason of this (not only in myself, but in all [others]) I wish briefly to touch upon here; it is, first, because esteem amplifies the truth, and then because presence diminishes it.

2. Good fame is principally generated by the favourable operation of the mind of a friend, wherein it is born; for the mind of an enemy, though it receive

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"Dear mountain-song of mine, thou goest forth;
Florence perchance wilt see, my native land,
That casts me out from her,
Empty of love and barren of all pity."

[1] The thirty-fifth year (see *Conv.*, iv. 24, par. 3).

[2] "Begging bit by bit his livelihood."
(*Par.*, 6. 141.)

[3] "The blame shall follow the offended party
With its habitual cry."
(*Par.*, 17. 52.)
It is a Tuscan proverb that "the blame is always with the offended."

the seed, conceives not. That mind which first gives it birth, whether to adorn its gift the more, or whether for the sake of the affection of the friend which receives it, does not confine itself within the limits of the truth, but oversteps them. And when, to adorn his relation, one oversteps thus, he speaks against conscience; when misled by love he does this, he does not speak against it. The second mind which receives this [report] is not only pleased with the amplification of the first, but in repeating it,[1] which is its office, embellishes it, and to such an extent, through the deceiving influence of the love in itself generated, that it makes this good report far greater than that which it received, either, like the first mind, with or without the consent of conscience.[2] And thus it is with the third receiver, and the fourth; and thus [fame] groweth ever greater. And in this way, by reversing the aforesaid causes, it may be seen how infamy in the same way ever increaseth. Wherefore Virgil says, in the fourth book of the *Æneid*, "Fame flourishes by activity,[3] and acquires greatness by going about."

3. Clearly, then, whoso wishes may see that the image generated by fame alone is always greater, whatever it may be [whether good or bad], than the thing itself in its true state.

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[1] "From cry to cry still giving him applause." (*Purg.*, 26. 125.)

[2] Either for the sake of embellishing or because misled by love.

[3] Probably Dante wrote *vige*, "flourishes," instead of *vive*, "lives;" as Virgil says, "*mobilitate viget*" (Milanese Editors).

Chapter IV.

1. Having shown the reason why fame increases both good and evil beyond their true proportions, it remains for us to demonstrate in this chapter the reasons why presence has the contrary effect; and, this demonstrated, we shall come quickly to the principal proposition, that is, the above-named excuse. I say, therefore, that by three causes is a person's worth[1] diminished by his presence. One of these is immaturity (I do not mean of years, but of mind), the second is envy, and these two belong to him who judges; the third is human imperfection, and this is in the judged.

2. Of the first we may briefly reason thus: The greater part of mankind live, not according to reason, but according to sense, like children;[2] and such as these do not understand things, except simply by their outside; and their goodness, which is adapted to its special ends, they do not see, because the eyes of reason are closed, which would have enabled them to behold it. Therefore they see quickly all that they are capable of seeing, and judge according to their sight. And because they form some opinion of another's good fame through report, with which, in that person's presence, their imperfect judgment is at variance (in that it judges solely, not according to

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[1] *Valore* is explained in *Conv.*, iv. 2, par. 5, to be almost equivalent to "power" or "virtue."

[2] "The ignorant common people form judgments without discernment" (*Ep. to Can Grande*, par. 2).

reason, but according to sense), they consider what they heard first to be a lie, as it were, and they disparage the person they had before esteemed. Therefore with them—who are like almost all the rest—presence diminishes both good and evil report. Such men are quickly charmed and quickly satiated; are often gay and often sad with brief joys and sorrows; quickly friends and quickly enemies; they do everything like children, without the use of reason.

3. The second [cause] is seen by these reasons: [first] that equality, with the wicked, causes envy;[1] and [second] envy causes perverted judgment, because it will not permit reason to argue in favour of the thing envied, and the judicatory power then becomes like a judge who hears but one side. Therefore, when such people see a famous person, they immediately become envious, because they see themselves with equal members and equal powers, and fear that the excellency of the other person will cause them to be less esteemed, and thus they not only misjudge, being swayed by passion, but by their calumnies cause others to misjudge. So that with them presence diminishes the good and the evil of every one they meet; and I say the evil, because many, delighting in evil deeds, envy the evil-doer.

4. The third cause is that human imperfection which belongs to him who is judged, and is not [understood] without some familiarity and intercourse [with him]. In evidence of this, [third cause,] we must know that man is stained in many ways, and as

[1] "There are who power, grace, honour, and renown
Fear they may lose because another rises."
(*Purg.*, 17. 118; and see *Conv.*, i. 11, par. 5.)

[St.] Augustine says, "no one is spotless." Sometimes man is stained by some passion which he is unable always to resist, sometimes through some offending member, sometimes by some stroke of fortune, sometimes through the disgrace of his relatives or some one near to him, which things fame carrieth not, but only the man's presence, and by his conversation he betrays them; and these stains cast a shadow over the purity of his goodness, so that it is made to seem less pure and less worthy. And this is why a prophet has less honour in his own country; this is why the good man should give his presence to few, and his intimacy to still fewer, in order that his name may be accepted,[1] and not disparaged.

5. And this third cause [human imperfection] may be applied to evil as well as good, if we reverse all the parts of our reasoning. Because it is easily seen that through this imperfection, which no one is without, presence takes away more from the good and evil in every one than truth would permit.[2]

6. And whereas, as is said above, I have presented myself to nearly all Italians, and have thus abased myself, perhaps, more than truth would allow (not only in respect to those to whom my fame had already penetrated, but also to the others), I have doubtless caused my things to have much less weight. It is therefore fitting that, with a loftier style, I should

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[1] "Accepted" or "*revered*," according to the Milanese Editors.

[2] So in *Purg.*, 7. 88, Dante explains how one judges better at a distance.

> "Better from off this ledge the acts and faces
> Of all of them will you discriminate
> Than in the plain below among the throng."

give to the present work somewhat of gravity, that it may thereby appear of greater authority; and let this excuse suffice for the obscurity of my commentary.

CHAPTER V.

1. THIS bread being cleansed of its accidental impurities, we have now but to free it from one [inherent] *in* its substance, that is, its being in the vulgar tongue, and not in Latin; so that we might metaphorically call it made of oats instead of wheat. And this [fault] may be briefly excused by three reasons, which moved me to prefer the former rather than the latter [language]. The first arises from care to avoid an unfit order of things; the second, from a consummate [1] liberality; the third, from a natural love of one's own tongue. And I intend here in this manner to discuss in due order these things and their causes, that I may free myself from the reproach above named.

2. The thing which most adorns and commends to us human undertakings, and which most directly conduces to their successful end, is the use of such qualities as are ordained to secure that end; as to make good cavaliers [2] we must have bravery of soul and strength of body. And thus he who is ordained

[1] The Italian word *pronta* (literally, "ready" or "prompt") is here used, as by many old writers, in the sense of "complete" or "consummate," which of course comprehends the idea of alacrity as one of the elements of "perfect" liberality. (See *Par.*, 24. 127, where Dante speaks of "il pronto creder mio" in the sense of "my *entire* creed," not "my *prompt* belief," as Longfellow has it.)

[2] *Cavalleria* means both "chivalry" and "cavalry."

to the service of others should have the qualities befitting that end, such as submission, understanding,[1] and obedience, without which he is unfitted for good service. Because if he be not submissive in every contingency,[2] he will always perform his service with effort and heaviness, and will seldom persevere in it;[3] and if he be not obedient, he will never serve except according to his own notion and desire, which is more the service of a friend than of a servant. Therefore, to avoid such unfitness, this commentary (which is made to take the place of a servant to the accompanying canzoni) should be subject to their every commandment; and it should be aware of the needs of its masters, and be obedient to them; all of which qualities would be lacking, were it [written] in Latin instead of in the vulgar tongue, seeing that the canzoni are in the latter.

3. For, in the first place, had it been in Latin, it would have been sovereign rather than subject, by its nobility, its virtue, and its beauty. By its nobility, because Latin is enduring and incorruptible, and the vulgar tongue is unstable and corruptible.[4] For we see that the ancient books of Latin tragedy and comedy cannot be changed from the form we have to-day, which is not the case with the vulgar tongue,

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[1] The understanding of his duties.

[2] Giuliani reads, "to every order."

[3] Fraticelli thinks there must be a gap in the text here, as only "submission" and "obedience" (and not "understanding") are referred to.

[4] In the *On Vulgar Eloquence*, bk. i. ch. 1, Dante says, "Of these two languages" (the scholastic and vulgate) "the vulgate is the most noble, because the first used by the human race, and also because it is used by everybody, and is natural and not artificial." This book was written after the *Convito*.

as that can be changed at will.[1] For we see in the cities of Italy, if we take notice of the past fifty years, how many words have been lost, or invented, or altered; therefore, if a short time can work such changes, how much more can a longer period effect! So that I think, should they who departed this life a thousand years ago return to their cities, they would believe them to be occupied by a foreign people, so different would the language be from theirs. Of this I shall speak elsewhere more fully, in a book which I intend to write, God willing, on *Vulgar Eloquence*.[2]

4. Again, Latin would be not subject, but sovereign, through its virtue. Everything is virtuous in its nature that fulfils the purpose for which it was ordained; and the better it does this, the more virtuous it is; therefore we call him a good man who leads the contemplative or the active life for which his nature fits him; we call the horse good that runs fast and far, which he is created to do; we call the sword good that cuts hard things with ease, for which end it is made. Thus language, being ordained to express human conceptions, is good when it does this; and the more perfectly it does it the better it is. Since, therefore, the Latin can express many conceptions of the mind of which the vulgar tongue is incapable (as they are aware who know both languages), its virtue is greater than that of the vulgar tongue.

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[1] Being without fixed laws of construction.

[2] This book on *Vulgar Eloquence* Fraticelli thinks was written 1305–7, although he gives 1314 as the date of this first book of the *Convito*, in which it is spoken of as a *future* work.

5. Again, it is not subject, but sovereign, by its beauty. Man calls that thing beautiful whose parts correspond fittingly, because their harmony results in beauty; thus man seems beautiful when his limbs correspond well, and we call singing beautiful when voices harmonize with each other after the rules of the art. Therefore that language is the most beautiful in which the words correspond best;[1] and this they do more in Latin than in the vulgar tongue, because the vulgar tongue follows custom, and the Latin, art;[2] whence it must be conceded to be more beautiful, more virtuous, and more noble. With which concludes the principal proposition, that is, that a Latin commentary would not have been the subject, but the sovereign, of the canzoni.

Chapter VI.

1. Having shown how the present commentary would not have been subject to the Italian canzoni had it been in Latin, it remains to show how it could neither have understood nor obeyed them; and then it will be demonstrated how, in order to avoid an unfit order [of things], it was necessary to speak in the vulgar tongue.

2. I say that the Latin could not have been an intelligent servant to its master, the Italian, for this reason. The intelligence of the servant demands, above all, his understanding two things perfectly. One

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[1] That is, have the closest relation to each other.

[2] That is, the Latin follows definite rules of construction rather than popular usage.

is the nature of his master; for there are masters of so asinine a nature that they order the reverse of what they want; and there are others who, without speaking, expect to be understood and served; and others who do not wish their servant to make a movement to do what is necessary without an order. And why there are these differences in men I do not intend to explain at present (as it would make too long a digression), except that I would say in general, that such [masters] are almost like beasts, to whom reason is of little profit. Therefore if the servant does not understand the nature of his master, it is evident that he cannot serve him perfectly. The second thing is that the servant must understand the friends of his master; for otherwise he can neither honour nor serve them, and thus he cannot serve his master perfectly, because the master and his friends make up a whole, as it were, seeing that their desires and non-desires are one.

3. Nor would the Latin commentary have understood these things as the vulgar tongue itself does. That the Latin would not have understood the vulgar tongue and its friends is proved thus: He who knows a thing in general does not know it perfectly; as he who recognizes an animal in the distance does not recognize it perfectly, because he cannot tell whether it is a dog, a wolf, or a goat. Latin understands the vulgar tongue in general, but not in detail; for, if it understood it in detail, it would understand all other vulgar tongues, because there is no reason why it should know one better than another. And thus any man well versed in Latin would also have a perfect knowledge of the vulgar tongues. But this

is not so; for a man well versed in Latin does not distinguish (if he be from Italy) the Provençal from the German; nor does a German distinguish the Italian from the Provençal; whence it is evident that the Latin is not cognizant of the vulgar tongue.

4. And again, neither is it cognizant of its [master's] friends; because it is impossible to know the friends without knowing the master; therefore, if Latin does not know the vulgar tongue, as is proved above, it is impossible that it should know its friends. And again, without conversation and intimacy it is impossible to know men, and Latin does not hold converse with so many of any nation[1] as does the vulgar tongue, to whom all are friends, and consequently it cannot know the friends of the vulgar tongue. And it is no contradiction to say, as one might, that Latin does hold converse with some friends of the vulgar tongue; for notwithstanding this, it is not familiar with all, and therefore has not a perfect knowledge of these friends; because it is a perfect knowledge that is required, and not an imperfect one.

CHAPTER VII.

1. HAVING proved that the Latin commentary would not have been an intelligent servant, I will show why it would not have been an obedient one. He is obedient who has that good disposition which we call

[1] *Lingua* ("tongue") is here used in the sense of "nation," as *favella* ("speech") is in *Inf.*, 5. 54—

"The empress of so many languages."

obedience.[1] True obedience should have three things, without which it is none: it must be sweet, and not bitter;[2] entirely under command, and not spontaneous; and it must be limited, and not unbounded.[3] These three things it was impossible for the Latin commentary to possess; and therefore it was impossible for it to be obedient.

2. That this would have been impossible to the Latin, as has been said, is shown thus: Everything that proceeds by inverse order is wearisome, and therefore is bitter, and not sweet; such as waking by night and sleeping by day, or going backwards instead of forwards. For the subject to command the sovereign is a reversal of order, because the right order is for the sovereign to command the subject; and thus it is bitter, and not sweet. And because it is impossible to yield sweet obedience to a bitter command, when the subject commands, it is impossible that the obedience of the sovereign should be sweet.[4] Therefore, if Latin be the sovereign of the vulgar tongue, as has been already shown by other reasons, and the canzoni, which take the place of command, are in the vulgar tongue, it is impossible that its exposition[5] could be sweet.

3. And obedience is entirely under command, and not spontaneous, when the person obeying would not have done the thing, either wholly or in part, of his

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[1] That is, not only in special actions, but in disposition, he must be obedient.

[2] That is, it must be cheerful, and not sullen.

[3] The command must be executed to the letter, but not exceeded.

[4] The effect partaking of the quality of the cause.

[5] *Ragione* is here used in the sense of "exposition" (see Fraticelli and others).

own will. And therefore, if I were ordered to wear two gowns, and, without being told, should wear one, then I say my obedience would not be entirely under command, but partly spontaneous. And such would have been that of the Latin commentary; and therefore it would have been an obedience not entirely under command. That it would have been such appears by this—that the Latin without the command of this master [the canzoni in Italian] would have explained much of their meaning (for that it explains itself is known to those who study Latin writings carefully) which the vulgar tongue never does.[1]

4. Again, obedience is limited, and not unbounded, when it executes the command to the letter, but does not go beyond it; as individual Nature is obedient to universal Nature when she gives man thirty-two teeth, neither more nor less, and gives the hand five fingers, neither more nor less; and man is obedient to justice when he does what the law commands, and neither more nor less.[2] Now, the Latin would not have done this, nor would it have sinned only in failure or in excess, but in both; and thus its obedience would not have been limited, but unbounded, and therefore it would not have been obedient. That the Latin would not have fulfilled the command of its master, but would have exceeded it, can be easily shown. This master (that is, these canzoni, to whom this commentary is assigned as

[1] Latin, by reason of its clear construction, would have made the meaning of the canzoni sufficiently plain without the need of further explanation.

[2] *Conv.*, iv. 17, par. 13.

servant) desires and commands that they shall be explained to all those to whom their meaning can be so conveyed that when they speak they shall be understood.[1] And no one can doubt that had they the voice to speak, such would be their orders. But the Latin could only have explained them to scholars; for the rest would not have understood it. Therefore, as among those who desire to understand these [canzoni] there are many more illiterate than learned, it follows that it [the Latin] would not have fulfilled this behest as well as the vulgar tongue, which is understood both by the learned and the unlearned. Also the Latin would have explained them to people of other nations, such as Germans, English, and others; in doing which it would have exceeded their order. For it would have been against their will, I say, speaking generally, to have explained their meaning where their beauty could not go with it.[2] And, moreover, let all observe that nothing harmonized by the laws of the Muses[3] can be changed from its own tongue to another one without destroying all its sweetness and harmony. And this is the reason why Homer is not turned from Greek into Latin like the other writings we have of theirs[4] [the Greeks]; and this is why the verses of the Psalter lack musical sweetness and harmony; for they have been trans-

[1] That is, to every one capable of understanding them.

[2] To explain them to those who, ignorant of their language, could not have appreciated their beauty, which consists, as Dante has already told us, in their style, or *letter*.

[3] That is, any poetical work.

[4] This phrase about Homer it seems to me should be rendered, "does not admit of *being* turned;" but Fraticelli interprets in the absolute sense, "*is* not turned," and makes it the basis of his argument on Dante's knowledge of Greek (see note 4 to *Conv.*, ii. 15, par. 3).

lated from Hebrew to Greek, and from Greek to Latin, and in the first translation all this sweetness perished. And thus is concluded what was promised in the beginning of the chapter immediately before this one.

Chapter VIII.

1. Since it has been demonstrated by sufficient reasons that, to avoid an unfitting order [of things], a commentary in the vulgar tongue and not in the Latin is needed to explain the aforesaid canzoni, I intend to show also how a consummate liberality[1] causes me to choose the former and forego the latter. We may, then, perceive this liberality in three things which pertain to the vulgar tongue, but not to the Latin. The first is to give to many; the second is to give useful things; the third is to give without being asked for the gift.

2. For to give gifts and help to one is a good thing, but to give gifts and help to many is the perfect good, in that it resembles the beneficence of God, who is the universal Benefactor. And again, to give to many is impossible without giving to one, because the one is included in the many. But it is easy to give to one without giving to many; therefore he who helps many does good in both ways; he who helps one does it but in one way; therefore we see the framers of the laws keeping a special eye to the good of the greatest number.

3. And again, to give useless things does good to

[1] See note to ch. 5. par. 1.

the receiver, in that it at least shows the friendliness of the giver; but it is not the perfect goodness, and therefore not consummate liberality, but rather as if a knight should give a physician a shield, when the physician had given him in writing the *Aphorisms* of Hippocrates, or *The Art* of Galen; because the wise say that the face of the gift should look like that of the receiver; that is to say, that it should be appropriate and useful to him; and such [a gift] is called consummate liberality in the person who gives thus judiciously.

4. But because moral arguments generally inspire a wish to trace their origin, I intend in this chapter to set forth briefly four reasons why the gift, to be of consummate liberality, must of necessity be useful to him who receives it.

5. First, because goodness should be pleasant and not disagreeable in all its acts; wherefore, if the gift be not given and received with pleasure, there is in it neither perfect goodness nor consummate liberality; and this pleasure can be inspired only by such advantage as shall accrue to the giver through his giving, and to the receiver through his receiving. The giver, therefore, should take care that on his side should remain the advantage of sincerity, which is above every other advantage; and should so arrange that the advantage of the usefulness of the gift should go to the receiver; and thus they will both be pleased, and liberality will be made more perfect.

6. Secondly, because goodness should always make everything better, and as it would be reprehensible to make a spade out of a fine sword, or a pretty cup out of a beautiful lute, so it is reprehensible to remove

a thing from a place where it is useful, and take it to a place where it will be less useful. And because it is reprehensible to labour in vain, it is not only reprehensible to put the thing where it would be less useful, but even where it would be equally useful. Therefore, for a change in things to be praiseworthy, it must always be for the better, because it ought to be superlatively praiseworthy; and this the gift cannot be, unless it becomes more precious by its transfer; and it cannot become more precious unless it be more useful to the receiver than to the giver. From which we conclude that the gift should be useful to him who receives it, in order that it may be the expression of consummate liberality.

7. Thirdly, because the work of virtue should be to gain to itself friends, since our life has need of them, and the end of virtue is to make our life happy; therefore, that the gift may make a friend of the receiver, it should be useful to him, because its utility stamps upon the memory the image of the gift,[1] which is the nutriment of friendship, and the better [the gift] the stronger this [impression] is; wherefore Martin is wont to say, "The gift I received from John I shall never cease to remember." Therefore, that the gift may have its full virtue, which is liberality, and that that may be consummate, it should be useful to him who receives it.

8. Finally, because virtue should be free in its action and not forced. Free action is when a person goes

[1] "And I—as by a signet is the wax
Which does not change the figure stamped upon it,
My brain is now imprinted by yourself."
(*Purg.*, 33. 79.)

voluntarily in any direction, which is made evident by his turning his face that way; a forced act is when he goes against his will, which he shows by not looking in the direction he goes. And the gift looks in that direction when it is directed to the needs of the receiver. And because it cannot be thus directed if it be not useful, it is necessary, in order that the virtue of the gift may have free action, that it should look in the direction it goes,[1] that is, towards the receiver; and therefore it must be of use to him, in order that it may express consummate liberality.

9. The third thing in which consummate liberality can be observed is to give that which is not demanded; because to give that which is demanded[2] is on the one side not goodness, but traffic; since the receiver purchases, although the giver does not sell; wherefore Seneca says "that nothing is bought so dear as that which is purchased with prayers."[3] Wherefore, in order that there may be consummate liberality in the gift, and that this may be visible in it, it is necessary that it should be free from any taint of traffic, and therefore the gift should not have been demanded. Why the thing prayed for should cost

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[1] A person looks in the direction he goes, when he goes voluntarily, otherwise he is dragged along with averted face; a gift may be said to do the same when adapted to the needs of the receiver, in which case the good will that goes with it is not impeded in its action.

[2] "For he who sees the need and waits the asking,
Already leans malicious tow'rds denial."
(*Purg.*, 17. 59.)

[3] "Nulla res carius constat, quam quæ præcibus empta est" (Seneca, *De Bene.*, ii. 1). From this chapter of Seneca Dante has taken his whole theory of liberality.

so dear I do not intend to reason upon now, because I shall treat of it fully in the last book of this work.[1]

Chapter IX.

1. All three conditions above named, which must co-operate that the gift may be of consummate liberality, were lacking in the Latin commentary but not in the vulgar tongue, as can be plainly shown thus: The Latin would not have served many; because, if we recall to mind what has already been said, scholars[2] in other languages than the Italian could not have availed themselves of its services.[3] And of those of this speech (if we should care to observe who they are) we shall find that only to one in a thousand could it have been really of use; because they would not have received it, so prone are they to base desires,[4] and thus deprived of that nobility of soul which above all desires this food.

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[1] Which was one of those never written. Here Dante gives us the intended subject of his "*last*" book. In ch. 12 he says that *Justice* is to be the subject of the fourteenth book; in book ii. ch. 1 he gives *Allegory* as the subject of the "penultimate," or fourteenth book; and in book iv. ch. 27 he gives it again as *Justice;* while in the twenty-sixth chapter of book iv. he seems to intend *Self-restraint* to be the subject of book vii. In connection with ch. 8 should be read the canzone on Avarice, No. 18, p. 198, in Fraticelli's edition. Fraticelli thinks that the "last book" aforesaid was intended to be a commentary on this canzone.

[2] *Letterati* in Dante's time meant those who knew Latin.

[3] That is, the Latin commentary would have been useless to scholars of other nations, because they would not have understood the Italian canzoni to which it referred.

[4] *Avarizia* is here used in the obsolete sense of "base desires," as in *Purg.*, 19. 113, where Adrian V. speaks of himself as "a soul parted from God, and wholly avaricious," or full of base desires.

And to their shame I say that they are not worthy to be called scholars, because they do not pursue learning for its own sake, but for the money or the honours that they gain thereby;[1] just as we should not call him a lute-player who kept a lute in the house to hire out, and not to play upon.

2. Returning, then, to the principal proposition, I say we can plainly see how the Latin would have benefited but few, but the vulgar tongue will certainly be of service to many. Because the good quality of mind that is waiting for such service is found in persons[2] who, through the wicked indifference of the world, have left literature to those who have turned her from a sovereign lady into a harlot; and these noble ones are princes, barons, knights, and many other noble people,[3] not only men, but women, knowing the vulgar tongue, but not the Latin, of whom there are many in this nation.

3. Again, the Latin would not have been, like the vulgar tongue, the giver of a useful gift, because nothing is useful except in proportion as its [essential] goodness is developed; because its potentiality is not perfect being; as in the case of gold, pearls, and other treasures which are buried, because those which are in the hands of the avaricious man are in a place much more vile than is the earth wherein such

[1] *Conv.*, iii. 2, par. 3.

[2] That is, the intelligent among those ignorant of Latin, who would be glad of a commentary in their own language, and who were very numerous, but nevertheless, through fashionable indifference, had left learning to those who thought only of profit.

[3] I do not think that Dante means only "the nobility" here, but that he intends to include all those "noble persons" who have a natural tendency towards the *noble* or contemplative life. The word *nobili* ("nobles") is used often in this sense in book iv.

treasures are hidden.[1] The true gift of this commentary is the explanation of the canzoni, for which it is written, and which is intended above all to lead men to knowledge and to virtue, as will be seen in the course of their exposition. This meaning can only be of use to them in whom true nobility is sown, after the manner treated of in the fourth book; and these are nearly all those ignorant of Latin, like those noble ones spoken of before in this chapter. Nor is this contradicted because there may be some scholars among them; because, as my master Aristotle says, in the beginning of the *Ethics*,[2] "one swallow does not make the spring." Therefore it is evident that the vulgar tongue will confer a useful gift, and the Latin would not have done so.

4. And again, the vulgar tongue gives a thing not demanded (which the Latin would not have done), because it gives itself, as commentary, a thing never demanded of anybody;[3] and this cannot be said of Latin, which has already been demanded as commentary and as explanation to many books, as may be readily seen at the beginning of many of them. And thus it is evident that consummate liberality impels me to the [use of the] vulgar tongue rather than the Latin.

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[1] Buried treasures are in a state of potential usefulness, but riches in the possession of the avaricious are not to be considered in the same light.

[2] *Ethics*, i. 7.

[3] Dante alludes to the then exclusive use of Latin in writing commentaries.

CHAPTER X.

1. EXCELLENT should be the excuse if at a banquet so noble in its viands and so honourable in its guests, were served oaten instead of wheaten bread;[1] and evident should be the reason that makes a man depart from a thing which has served others for a long while, such as making commentaries in Latin. And the reason should be evident, for the end of new things is not certain, because we have never had that experience of them whereby we estimate the process and the end of things long known and used. Wherefore the law is impelled to command that a man should take great heed how he enters upon a new road, saying that "in establishing anything new, manifest reason should be shown for departing from that long used."

2. Therefore, let no one wonder at the long digression of my excuse, but, as it is necessary, bear patiently with its length. Continuing which digression, I say (since it has been already shown how in order to avoid an unfitting order [in things], and also through consummate liberality, I have been impelled to write my commentary in the vulgar tongue instead of the Latin) the order of the whole apology demands that I should [also] show how I was moved to this by the natural love of my own language, which is the third and last reason that impelled me to it. I say that natural love especially impels the lover to three

[1] See *Conv.*, i. 5, par. 1.

things: one is, to magnify the beloved; the second is, to be jealous for him; the third is, to defend him, as any one may see continually happening. And these three things made me choose it, that is, our own tongue, which for inherent and accidental reasons I love and have loved.

3. I was impelled, first, to magnify it. And that herein I do magnify it may be seen by this reason. Although by many properties of greatness things may be magnified, that is, made great, nothing imparts so much greatness as the greatness of their special virtue, which is the mother and preserver of all other [kinds of] greatness. Whence man can have no more excellent greatness than that of virtuous action, which is his special virtue, by which the greatness of true dignities and true honours, of true power, of true riches, of true friends, of true and brilliant renown, is acquired and preserved. And this greatness I give to this friend [the vulgar tongue], inasmuch as what it possesses of potential and occult virtue I cause it to manifest actively and openly in its peculiar province, which is, to express the meaning conceived.

4. I am impelled, secondly, by my jealousy for it. The jealousy of a friend makes him solicitous to provide for the remote future. Wherefore, thinking that through a desire to understand these canzoni, some ignorant[1] person might have the Latin commentary translated into the vulgar tongue, and fearing that this translation might be done by some one who would make it appear hideous (as he did who trans-

[1] That is, ignorant of Latin.

lated the *Ethics*),[1] I have taken the precaution to do it myself, having more confidence in myself than in another.

5. Again, I am impelled to defend it [the vulgar tongue] from many of its accusers, who disparage it, and commend others, above all the language of *Oco*,[2] saying that the latter is better and more beautiful than the former, wherein they depart from the truth. Because by this commentary shall be seen the great excellence of the vulgar tongue of *Si*,[3] because (although the highest and most novel conceptions can be almost as fittingly, adequately, and beautifully expressed in it as in the Latin) its excellence in rhymed pieces, on account of the accidental adornments connected with them, such as rhyme and rhythm, or ordered numbers, cannot be perfectly shown; as it is with the beauty of a woman, when the splendour of her jewels and her garments draw to her more admiration than her person.[4] Wherefore

[1] Here follow in all the texts the words, "which was Taddeo the Hippocratist"—a clause which Fraticelli maintains has been proved to be the addition of some copyist. Taddeo d'Alderotto, of Florence, was a celebrated physician, surnamed "the Hippocratist" from his excellence in his profession, and who translated the *Ethics* of Aristotle into Italian.

[2] The Provençal language. In the *Vulgar Eloquence*, i. 8, Dante speaks of the languages of *oc*, of *oil*, and of *si*, as the Spanish, the French, and the Italian. In the *Vita Nuova*, § 25, he speaks of the Provençal as the "lingua d'oco" (thence *Languedoc*). Fraticelli remarks in a note to this passage, "All these affirmative particles are derived from the Latin; the Italian *si* from *sic* or *sic est;* the Provençal from *hoc est;* the French from *hoc illud est*, evident in the old form *ouill*, now *oui*."

[3] The Italian language (see *Inf.*, 33. 80, "That lovely country where the *si* is sounded").

[4] "That caught the eye more than the person did."
(*Par.*, 15. 102.)
That is, prose shows the true beauty of a language more than poetry, where the attention is distracted by the ornaments of verse.

he who would judge a woman truly looks at her when, unaccompanied by any accidental adornment, her natural beauty alone remains to her; as it shall be with this commentary, wherein shall be seen the facility of its language, the propriety of its diction, and the sweet discourse it shall hold; which he who considers well shall see to be full of the sweetest and most exquisite beauty. But because it is most virtuous in its design to show the futility and malice of its accuser, I shall tell, for the confounding of those who attack the Italian language, the purpose which moves them to do this; and upon this I shall now write a special chapter, that their infamy may be the more notorious.

Chapter XI.

1. To the perpetual shame and abasement of those wicked men of Italy who praise the language of others and disparage their own, I would say that their motive springs from five abominable causes. The first is intellectual blindness;[1] the second, vicious excuses;[2] the third, greed of vain-glory; the fourth, an argument based on envy; the fifth and last, littleness of soul, that is, pusillanimity. And each of these vices has so large a following, that few are they who are free from them.

2. Of the first we may reason thus: As the sensitive part of the soul has its eyes, by which it perceives the difference in things, as to their external colouring; so

[1] Or want of discernment.
[2] As when an unskilful workman blames his tools.

the rational part has its eye, by which it perceives the difference in things as to their adaptation to a certain end, and this is discernment.[1] And as he who is blind in the eyes of sense always follows the lead of others,[2] for evil or good; so he who is blind to the light of discernment, always, in his judgments, follows the popular voice,[3] whether it be right or wrong. Therefore whenever the guide is blind, he and the other blind man who leans on him must needs come to a bad end. Wherefore it is written that "when the blind leadeth the blind, they both fall into the ditch."[4] This popular voice has long been raised against our vulgar tongue for the reasons which will be discussed below.[5] Following this [popular voice], the aforesaid blind men, who are almost innumerable, with their hands upon the shoulders of these liars, have fallen into the ditch of false opinion, from which they know not how to get out. Of the use of this light of discernment the common people especially are deprived, because, occupied from the beginning of their lives in some trade, their mind is so absorbed in that by force of necessity, that they are capable of understanding nothing else. And because the habit of virtue, whether moral or intellectual, cannot be acquired suddenly, but must be the result of long custom, and they are altogether devoted to some trade, and care

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[1] *Conv.*, iv. 8, par. 1.

[2] "E'en as a blind man goes behind his guide." (*Purg.*, 16. 10.)

[3] "To clamour more than truth they turn their faces." (*Purg.*, 26. 121.)

[4] Matt. xv. 14; and see *Purg.*, 15. 14—
"The error of the blind who would be leaders."

[5] The last four reasons mentioned in the beginning of the chapter.

nothing to know other things, it is impossible for them to have discernment. Whence it happens that they often cry, "Long life!" to [that which is] their death, or, "Death!" to [that which is] their life, provided that somebody begins it.[1] And this is a most dangerous effect of their blindness. Wherefore Boëthius pronounced popular glory to be vain, because he saw that it was without discernment. Such as these are to be called sheep,[2] and not men; for if a sheep throw itself over a cliff a thousand paces high, all the others follow it; and if one sheep, while crossing a road, gives a leap for any reason, all the rest leap, although seeing there is nothing to leap over. And I have seen many jump into a well after one that jumped into it, perhaps believing that it was leaping a wall, notwithstanding that the shepherd, weeping and shouting, tried to oppose them with arms and breast.

3. The second kind work against our language by vicious excuses. They are they who would rather be considered as masters than be such; and, to avoid the reverse (that is, not to be considered as masters), they always lay the blame upon the materials prepared for their art, or upon their tools; as the bad smith blames the iron given him, and the bad lute-player blames

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[1] That is, the populace are always ready to accept their ruin, or reject their salvation, provided some one starts the outcry.

[2] "Be ye as men, and not as silly sheep!"
(*Par.*, 5. 80.)

"What the foremost does the others do,
Huddling themselves against her if she stop."
(*Purg.*, 3. 82.)

Dante's "disdainful soul" seems to have cherished a special contempt for sheep, as numerous passages in his works prove.

the lute, thinking thus to lay the fault of the bad knife or the bad playing upon the iron or the lute, and to exculpate themselves. Such are they (and they are not few) who wish to be considered orators ; and in order to excuse themselves for not speaking, or for speaking badly, blame and accuse their material, that is, their own language, and praise that of others in which they are not required to work. And whoever wishes to see wherein this iron [of the vulgar tongue] deserves blame, let him look at the work that good workmen have done with it, and he will recognize the viciousness of those who, laying the blame upon it, think they excuse themselves. Against such does Tullius exclaim, in the beginning of one of his books called *De Finibus*, because in his time they blamed the Latin language and commended the Greek, for the same reasons that these people consider the Italian vile and the Provençal precious.

4. The third kind work against our language because of their greed of vain-glory. Many are they who, by simply describing things in another language, and praising it, think they are worthy of more admiration than if they described the same things in their own tongue. And doubtless he deserves praise for his intelligence who learns a foreign language well ; but it is wrong for him to commend it beyond the truth, in order to glorify himself by its acquisition.

5. The fourth [kind] base their argument on envy. As has been already said, envy always exists where there is some sort of equality. Between men of one nation there is equality of speech ; and because one cannot use it like another, envy is engendered. The envious man then argues, not by blaming him who

speaks for not knowing how to speak, but by blaming the material in which he works, in order (by disparaging the work from that side) to take away the honour and fame of the speaker; as he who should blame the blade of a sword, not for the sake of condemning the blade, but all the work of the master.

6. The fifth and last kind are impelled by baseness of soul. The magnanimous[1] man always magnifies himself in his heart, and so the pusillanimous,[2] on the contrary, always rates himself less than he is. And because to magnify or to belittle always bears relation to something by comparison with which the magnanimous man makes himself out great, and the pusillanimous small, it happens that the magnanimous man always sees others smaller than they are, and the pusillanimous greater. And because with the measure with which a man measures himself will he measure his belongings (which are, as it were, a part of himself), it happens that to the magnanimous his belongings always seem better than they are, and those of others less good; the pusillanimous always believes his own things to have little value, and those of others to have much. Therefore many, by such abasement, disparage their own language and commend that of others; and of such are all those abominable wretches of Italy who despise this

[1] Dante, who generally keeps as close as possible to the Latin signification of his words, seems to use "magnanimous" here in its literal meaning of "great-souled," as in *Inf.*, 10. 73, where Farinata is called magnanimous in the sense of "lofty-minded." In *Inf.*, 2. 43, it is used in the sense of "brave."

[2] "Pusillanimous" is "little-minded" or mean-spirited here—a man without proper self-esteem or self-confidence (see *Conv.*, iv. 15, par. 6). "He who estimates his own worth less highly than it deserves is little-minded" (Aristotle, *Ethics*, bk. iv. ch. 3).

precious language of theirs, the which, if it be despicable in any way, becomes so only when it resounds from the meretricious lips of these adulterers; to whose guidance those blind men commit themselves of whom, under our first head, we made mention.

CHAPTER XII.

1. IF flames were to be plainly seen issuing from the windows of a house, and if some one were to ask if that house was on fire, and another man should answer, "Yes," it would be hard to say which of the two were the more ridiculous. And not otherwise [than ridiculous] would be question and answer if some one should ask me whether I loved my own language, and to whom I should answer, "Yes;" and for these same reasons. But nevertheless, it remains to be shown that I have not only love, but most perfect love for it, and also to further condemn its adversaries. And in demonstrating this to whomsoever shall be capable of understanding it, I shall tell how I became its lover, and then how this love was confirmed.

2. I say that naturally (as we may see written by Tullius, in his *Friendship*, wherein he does not disagree with the ideas of the Philosopher as expressed in the eighth and ninth of the *Ethics*) proximity and goodness are the causes that engender love; advantage, study, and habit, the causes that increase it. And all these causes have contributed to inspire and to strengthen the love which I bear to my own language, as I shall proceed briefly to show.

3. That thing is nearest to a person which is, of all things of its kind, the most closely related to himself;[1] thus of all men the son is nearest to the father, and of all arts medicine is nearest to the doctor, and music to the musician, because these are more closely related to them than any others; of all countries, the one a man lives in is nearest to him, because it is most closely related to him. And thus a man's own language is nearest to him, because most closely related, being that one which comes alone and before all others in his mind,[2] and not only of itself is it thus related, but by accident,[3] inasmuch as it is connected with those nearest to him, such as his kinsmen, and his fellow-citizens, and his own people. And this is his own language, which is not only near, but the very nearest, to every one. Because if proximity be the seed of friendship, as has been stated above, it is plain that it has been one of the causes of the love I bear my own language, which is nearer to me than the others. The above-named reason (that is, that we are most nearly related to that which is pre-eminently first in our mind) gave rise to that custom of the people which makes the firstborn inherit everything, as the nearest of kin; and, because the nearest, therefore the most beloved.

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[1] "As the most perfect thing
Ever feels most of pleasure and of pain."
(*Inf.*, 6. 106.)

[2] "Seeing that not only men, but even women and little children, as far as their nature will permit, are obliged to acquire it" (*Vulgar Eloquence*, i. 1).

[3] Here, as elsewhere, "accident" is used in the scholastic sense of "that which is not inherent"—a quality which depends upon something else, and can be added to or taken from that other thing without affecting its existence.

4. And again, its goodness makes me its friend. And here we must know that every good quality peculiar to a thing is lovable in that thing; as men should have a fine beard, and women should have the whole face quite free from hair; as the [fox] hound should have a keen scent, and the greyhound great speed. And the more peculiar this good quality, the more lovable it is; whence, although all virtue is lovable in man, that is most so which is most peculiarly human; and this is justice[1] which belongs only to the reason or intellect, that is, the will.[2] She [justice] is so lovable that, as the Philosopher says in the fifth of the *Ethics*, even her enemies, such as thieves and robbers, love her; and therefore we see that her opposite, which is injustice (such as treachery, ingratitude, falsehood, theft, rapine, deceit, and their like[3]), is hated above all things. For these are such inhuman sins that, to defend one's self from such infamy, long custom has agreed that a man may be allowed to speak of himself, as we have said before [in the second chapter], and may declare that he is faithful and loyal. Of this subject I shall treat more fully in the fourteenth book, and, leaving it here, return to my proposition. Having proved, then, that

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[1] "In justice all virtue is comprehended" (*Ethics*, 5. 1). "Justice," with Dante, except in the *Inferno*, generally means "right-doing" or righteousness (see *Par.*, 18. 116, and 6. 88 and 121; also *Purg.*, 11. 37; 18. 117, and 19. 77; and *Conv.*, iv. 17, par. 13, "Justice disposes us to love and practise righteousness in all things;" also *Conv.*, iv. 27).

[2] This passage should read, "Which belongs only to the reason, that is, the intellect and the will" (see book iv. 22, par. 4).

[3] See *Inf.*, 11. 58, where "fraud" includes

> "Hypocrisy, flattery, and who deals in magic,
> Falsification, theft, and simony,
> Panders, and barrators, and the like filth."

the good quality most peculiar to a thing is that which is most loved and commended in it, we have to see what this is [in the Italian]. And we see that, of all things pertaining to language, the power of adequately expressing thought is the most loved and commended; therefore this is its peculiar virtue.[1] And as this belongs to our own language, as has been proved above in another chapter, it is plain that this was one of the causes of my love for it; since, as we have said, goodness is one of the causes that engender love.

Chapter XIII.

1. Having told how two things exist in my own language which have made me its lover—that is, its nearness to myself, and its peculiar goodness, I will tell how, by benefits [conferred] and harmony of aim, and by the good will arising from long habit, that love is confirmed and increased.

2. I say first, that, for myself, I have received from it the greatest benefits. For we must know that of all benefits, the greatest is that which is most precious to him who receives it, and nothing is so precious as that thing for the sake of which we desire all others; and all other things are desired for the sake of the perfection of him who desires them.[2] Whence, as man has two perfections, a first and a second (the first as *being*, the second as *being good*), if my own

[1] *Conv.*, i. 5, par. 4.

[2] That is, nothing is so precious to us as our own perfection, and all other things are desirable in proportion as they help us to obtain it.

language has been the cause of both the one and the other, I have received from it the very greatest of benefits. And that it has been the cause of my being, I can very briefly demonstrate. The efficient cause of the existence of things is not single, but of several efficient causes one will be greater than the rest;[1] thus the fire and the hammer are efficient causes of the knife, although the principal cause is the smith. This my language was the uniter of my parents, who spoke with it (as the fire is the preparer of the iron for the smith who makes the knife); therefore it is evident that it co-operated in my generation, and thus was one of the causes of my being. And again, this my language introduced me to the path of knowledge (which is our final perfection), inasmuch as through it I entered upon Latin, and by its aid it was taught to me, and through Latin I was enabled to go farther; and thus my language is explained and recognized by me as having been to me the greatest of benefactors.

3. And it has had the same purpose as myself, as I can show thus: All things naturally strive for self-preservation; whence if the vulgar tongue could work for itself, it would strive for this, which would be to secure its greater stability; and it could gain no greater stability than by uniting itself with number and with rhyme. And this has been my

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[1] Giuliani wishes to read, "several *influential* causes," as there can be, strictly speaking, but one *efficient* cause, the others being *material*, *formal*, or *final* (see *Conv.*, iv. 4, par. 5; and *Par.*, 2. 128, "As from the smith proceeds the hammer's craft"). Brunetto Latini (*Tes.*, ii. 30) uses the same metaphor, and also Aristotle, *De An.*, ii. Dante also employs it in *De Monarchia*, iii. 6.

study, as has been so plainly manifested, that there needs no further testimony thereto. So that my study has been one with its own, whence from this harmony love has been confirmed and increased.

4. And there has been the good will arising from habit; because, from the beginning of my life, I have had for it good will and fellowship, and I have used it in deliberating, interpreting, and questioning. Wherefore, if love increases by habit, as plainly appears, it is evident that it has exceedingly increased in me, seeing that I have spent all my time with this tongue. And thus we see that all the causes that engender and increase love [1] have co-operated in this, by which we conclude that not only love, but most perfect love, is that which I ought to have, and do have, for it.

5. Thus, by looking back, and recollecting the reasons before noted, we may see that the bread with which we should eat of the meats of the accompanying canzoni has been sufficiently cleansed of its specks,[2] and of [the reproach of] being oaten;[3] therefore it is time to think of serving the meats. This shall be that bread [4] mixed with barley with which thousands shall satisfy themselves, and of which my full baskets shall overflow. This shall be the new light, the new

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[1] "All those stings
That make this heart of ours turn unto God."
(*Par.*, 26. 55.)

[2] See *Conv.*, i. 2, par. 1.

[3] In *Conv.*, i. 10, par. 1, Dante uses the word *biado*, which may mean any sort of grain, but in connection with bread is generally translated "oats," but here he mentions especially *pane orzato*, of "barley."

[4] See Prov. ix. 5, "Come, eat of my bread;" and Ecclus. xv. 3, "With the bread of understanding shall she (Wisdom) feed him."

sun, which shall rise when the worn-out one[1] shall set, and shall give light to them who are in shadow and in darkness because of the old sun, which does not enlighten them.

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[1] The Latin language. But this seems to be only the meaning of the letter, and Dante must have referred also to the truth that he had gleaned as "the new sun."

BOOK II.

CANZONE I.

1.

YE who, intelligent, the third heaven guide,[1]
Hear that discourse I hold within my heart;
To none else can I speak, so strange it seems.
That Heaven, which follows obedient to your will,
Celestial creatures, whither ye direct,
Hath brought me to my present low estate.
Wherefore, would I bemoan the life I lead,
To ye, high Powers, befits it that I turn:
Therefore, I pray ye, listen to my prayer,
And I will tell, how late within my heart
My sorrowing soul bewept her heavy fate,
And how a spirit came to strive with her,
Borne on the shining rays of your bright star.

2.

The life of my sad soul hath ever been
The one sweet thought[2] that soars so oft to heaven,
To kneel before the footstool of your Sire:
There it beheld a Lady worshipping;
And of her brought to me such tidings sweet,
That all my soul cried out, "I, too, would go!"

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[1] Or, "Ye who *by force of thought* the third heaven guide." The angelic Intelligences who control the third heaven (that of Venus) by the operation of their intellect, and through the influences of that heaven the love of men (see note to ch. 2 of this book, par. 1.; and see *Par.*, 8. 37).

[2] Of Beatrice.

Then came a thought [1] that put the first to flight,
And swayed my being with such lordly power,
That my heart trembled, and my face was changed.
This showed another Lady unto me,
And said, "If any would salvation find,
Let him but fix his asking eyes on hers,
If he fear not the anguish of deep sighs."

3.

And so opposed this thought, that it destroyed
That peaceful [2] thought, was wont to speak to me
Of a dear angel, that is crowned in heaven.
And my soul wept, so great once more her grief,
And said, "Ah! woe is me! how swift hath fled
That pitying thought that came to comfort me!"
And to mine eyes this sorrowing one did say,
"Alas the hour ye met this Lady's gaze!
Why put not faith in what I said of her?
I said to ye, 'Well in those eyes of hers
Should stand that love that killeth such as I;
Nor did it profit me to know, and fear
To look on, that dread Power that wrought my death."

4.

"Thou art not dead, thou art but sore dismayed,
O soul of ours, that lamentest thus!"
Said the sweet spirit of the noble love;
"Because this Lady bright, whose power thou feel'st,
Hath so transformed all thy way of life,
That thou dost fear, seeing thou art so base.
But look how pitiful and meek [2] she is,
And in her greatness, courteous and most wise;
And take her for thy sovereign Lady now;
Because, if thou wilt to thyself be true,
Such miracles of beauty thou shalt see,
That thou shalt say, 'O Love, my only Lord,
Behold thy handmaid: work in her thy will!'"

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[1] Of Divine philosophy (see Appendix II. to ch. 2).

[2] In both places the word in the original is *umile*, "humble," or "meek." But the Edit. Pes. have pointed out that Dante often uses the word to convey rather the sense of "peace," or "tranquillity," or "freedom from all desire." It is used many times in this sense in the *Vita Nuova*, and we even have the Empyrean, or the Heaven of *Peace*, spoken of as "the Heaven of *Humility* where Mary dwells" (see *Vita Nuova*, § 35).

5.

Canzone mine, I fear that few they are,
Who all thy meaning deep will understand,
So dark and difficult thy speech to them.
Wherefore, if peradventure thou shalt go
To such as seem not to perceive thy worth,
I pray thee then take comfort to thyself,
And say to them, my new and dear delight,
"Behold at least, how very fair I am!"

CHAPTER I.

1. WHEREAS I, the server [of this banquet], speaking by way of preface, have already sufficiently prepared my bread by means of the preceding treatise, time calls, and demands that my ship should leave its haven; wherefore setting the mainsail of reason to [catch] the breeze of my desire, I go forth upon the ocean, with the hope of a smooth voyage and a safe port.[1] But in order that this my food may be more profitable, before the first course appears, I wish to show how it should be eaten.

2. I say that, as has been stated in the first chapter, this explanation should be both literal and allegorical. And to understand this, we should know that books[2] can be understood, and ought to be explained, in four principal senses.[3] One is called *literal*, and this it is

[1] "To traverse better waters hoists its sail
The little vessel of my genius now,
And far behind it leaves that cruel sea."
(*Purg.*, I. 1; and see first lines of *Par.*, 2.)

[2] *Scritture*, literally "writings" or "books," was often used in the time of Dante in the sense of "doctrine" or "knowledge" (see an example in *Villani*, vi. 1).

[3] This theory of a quadruple meaning gained ground continually from the time of the fifth century, on account of the philosophical development of Christian ontology. Cassianus Erem. explains these meanings much as Dante has: "Theoretical science is divided into two parts—the *historical* and the spiritual meaning; and the latter into three—*tropological, allegorical, anagogical. Tropology* (morality) relates to the improvement of morals; *allegory* to another signification than that of the letter; *anagogy* by the *spiritual* conception rises to the most sublime and secret things of the celestial mysteries. The four senses may be expressed at once in the same image. Thus, for example, *Jerusalem* literally may mean, the city of the Jews; allegorically, the Christian Church; tropologically, the human soul; anagogically, the celestial city" (Cass. Erem., *De Spirit. Scient.*, c. 8).

which goes no further than the letter, such as the simple narration of the thing of which you treat:[1] [of which a perfect and appropriate example is to be found in the third canzone, treating of nobility.] The second is called *allegorical*, and this is the meaning hidden under the cloak of fables, and is a truth concealed beneath a fair fiction; as when Ovid says that Orpheus with his lute tamed wild beasts, and moved trees and rocks; which means that the wise man, with the instrument of his voice, softens and humbles cruel hearts, and moves at his will those who live neither for science nor for art, and those who, having no rational life whatever, are almost like stones. And how this hidden thing [the allegorical meaning] may be found by the wise,[2] will be explained in the last book but one. The theologians, however, take this meaning differently from the poets; but because I intend to follow here the method of the poets, I shall take the allegorical meaning according to their usage.

3. The third sense is called *moral;*[3] and this readers should carefully gather from all writings, for the benefit of themselves and their descendants; it is such as we may gather from the Gospel, when Christ went up into the mountain to be transfigured, and of

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[1] After these words there is a gap in the manuscript, which the *Cod. Ricc.* supplies as in the text; but the words in brackets seem to me a mistake, as the canzone referred to is anything but a literal narration. Giuliani reads, "That meaning which you gather from the fables and tales of literature," which has at least the merit of connecting the previous sentence with the following one.

[2] Giuliani wishes to insert here (as conveying more fully the meaning of Dante), "under this fair falsehood" (of fable). And see note to book i. ch. 12, on the subject of "the last book but one."

[3] See *Ep. to Can Grande*, par. 7.

the twelve apostles took with Him but three;[1] which in the moral sense may be understood thus, that in most secret things we should have few companions.

4. The fourth sense is called *anagogical* [or mystical],[2] that is, beyond sense; and this is when a book is spiritually expounded, which, although [a narration] in its literal sense, by the things signified refers to the supernal things of the eternal glory;[3] as we may see in that psalm[4] of the Prophet, where he says that when Israel went out of Egypt Judæa became holy and free. Which, although manifestly true according to the letter, is nevertheless true also in its spiritual meaning—that the soul, in forsaking its sins, becomes holy and free in its powers[5] [or functions].

5. And in such demonstration, the literal sense should always come first, as that whose meaning includes all the rest, and without which it would be impossible and irrational to understand the others; and above all would it be impossible with the allegorical. Because in everything which has an inside and an outside,[6] it is impossible to get at the inside,

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[1] "As Jesus to the three gave clearer vision."
(*Par.*, 25. 33.)

[2] "*Litera* gesta refert, quid credas *allegoria*, *moralis* quid agas, quid operes *anagogica*" (Buti).

[3] "The glory of Him who moveth everything."
(*Par.*, 1. 1.)

[4] Ps. cxiv. 1 (see *Ep. to Can Grande*, par. 7).

[5] Here Dante differs from his Epistle quoted above, where he defines this as the *moral* sense (see par. 7 for the *mystical* sense).

[6] Literally, "has its within and without." The Rev. Geo. Stanley Faber, in his *The Sacred Calendar of Prophecy*, speaking of the figurative language of the prophets, says, "The proper use and import of this language, comprising the hieroglyphic system of the ancient Hebrews, seems to have been taught as one great branch of education in those schools of the prophets which are often mentioned in the Scriptures. . . . Every book thus written is called by the prophets themselves

if we have not first got at the outside. Wherefore, as in books the literal sense is always the outside, it is impossible to get at the other [senses], especially the allegorical, without first getting at the literal.

6. Again it is impossible, because in everything, natural or artificial, it is impossible to have *form*[1] without a previous preparation of the subject which should take that form; as it is impossible to have the form *gold*, unless the matter,[2] that is, the subject, be not first prepared and made ready; or to have the form of the ark, if the matter, that is, the wood, be

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a book written within and without (see Ezek. ii. 9, 'A roll of a book was therein, and it was *written within and without*;' and Rev. v. 1)."

Clemens Alexandrinus says, "The Aristotelians assert that some of their books are *esoteric* and some exoteric" (*Strom.*, bk. v. p. 681).

Aulus Gellius says the same thing of Aristotle; and Apuleius says of Plato that "his doctrines were intelligible to very few of the most devout, and quite obscure to the profane" (*Apol.*, p. 419).

Arnold of Villanova, a celebrated physician and contemporary of Dante (1235–1312), says in his *Testamentum*, "Philosophers wrote with a double meaning; the one was *true*, the other *false*. The first was expressed in dark words for the understandings of the children of wisdom; the last was couched in plain language" (see Rossetti's *Influence of the Anti-papal Spirit*).

The art of expressing a thing with two meanings was taught in the schools on regular principles; it was the first of the seven mystic sciences of the *Trivium* and *Quadrivium*, and was called *Grammar* (see Aroux, *Dante Hérétique*, etc.).

[1] "All things whate'er they be
Have order among themselves, and this is form."
(*Par.*, I. 103.)

"Then as the fire doth ever upward move
Because its form is born but to ascend."
(*Purg.*, 18. 28.)

Form in scholastic language signifies that which makes the essence of a thing, or the passing from the potential to the actual. "Whatever is *act*, is *form*," says St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theol.*, quæst. 66, art. 1). "And *form* was divided into substantial form, which caused a thing to be; and accidental form, which caused it to be in a certain way." "The soul is the substantial form of man," he says (quæst. 76, art. 4).

[2] Giuliani reads *miniera*, "ore," instead of *materia*.

not first prepared and made ready. Whence, as the literal meaning is always the subject and matter of the others,[1] above all of the allegorical, it is impossible to get at a knowledge of the others first. Moreover it is impossible, because in all things, natural and artificial, it is impossible to proceed till the foundation be laid, whether in a house or a study. Whence, as exposition is the building of knowledge, and the literal exposition is the foundation of the others, above all of the allegorical, it is impossible to get at the latter first.

7. Again, admitting it were possible, it would be *irrational*, that is, out of order, and therefore a very fatiguing and erroneous process. For, as the Philosopher says, in the first of the *Physics*, nature wills that our knowledge should increase in due order, that is, that we should proceed from what we know best, to what we do not know so well. I say that nature wills it, because this way of learning is naturally innate in us. And moreover, if those meanings other than literal be less understood (which they are, as plainly appears), it would be irrational to proceed to expound them, if the literal sense had not been first explained. I therefore, for these reasons, will always

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[1] Upon this passage, Perez, in *La Beatrice Svelata*, has the following comment: "*Matter* and *form* are two of the many words that, having suffered extensive changes in value and importance between Dante's time and ours, have caused many errors in the explanation of his works. A man of that age, especially if he were a philosopher, who would wish to express the conception which to-day we should phrase thus, 'This book, although amorous in its *form*, is entirely *philosophical* in its *matter*,' would have said on the contrary, 'This book, although philosophical in its *form*, is entirely amorous in its *matter*;' *form* in that day expressing only the *intrinsic constitutional nature of the entity*."

discuss first the *literal* meaning of each canzone, and after that will discuss its *allegory*, that is, the hidden truth; and sometimes will touch incidentally upon the other meanings, as time and place will permit.

Chapter II.

1. To begin, then, I say that the star of Venus had twice revolved in that circuit[1] of hers (which makes her appear in the morning or the evening according to her two different periods[2]) after the passing away of that blessed Beatrice who lives in heaven with the angels, and on earth with my soul,[3] when that noble lady[4] of whom I made mention in the latter part of the *Vita Nuova*,[5] first appeared, accompanied by Love, before mine eyes,[6] and took up her abode in

[1] "Called by the astronomers *epicycle*" (*Conv.*, ii. 4, par. 3). And as this epicycle is completed in six months, Dante wishes us to understand that a year had elapsed since the death of Beatrice. Compare *Vita Nuova*, § 35, in Appendix II. to this chapter; and *Purg.*, 31. 36. For full explanation of the epicycle of Venus, see Appendix I. to this chapter.

[2] "The star
That courts the sun, now following, now in front"
(*Par.*, 8. 9),
as it is the morning or the evening star.

[3] "My mind enamoured which is dallying
At all times with my lady."
(*Par.*, 27. 88.)

[4] "Gentile" has always in the *Convito*, as in our older English, the sense of "noble," and Dante uses *gentilezza* and *nobiltà* as synonyms. And it must be remembered that in the time of Dante the word *donna* still retained its primitive sense of *domina* ("lady" as the feminine of "lord"), and I have often been obliged to write "sovereign lady" in order to give the full force of Dante's meaning.

[5] *Vita Nuova*, §§ 36–39. See Appendix II. to this chapter.

[6] This mention of the "lady at the window" of the *Vita Nuova* (by whom Lowell thought Dante meant Speculation) is sufficient evidence of her identity with the "Philosophy" of the *Convito*.

my mind. And as I have said in the above-named little book, it was more her nobility than my choice that made me consent to be hers; for she showed herself so full of impassioned pity for my widowed life, that the spirits of my eyes became her most devoted friends.[1] And this accomplished, they wrought within me in such a manner that my good will was content to espouse her image.[2] But because it is not suddenly that Love is born, and increases, and becomes perfect, but it takes some time and nourishment of thoughts, and above all where there are opposing thoughts that hinder it, therefore, before this new love[3] could become perfect, there needed to be much strife between the thought that fed it and the thought opposed to it,[4] the which for that glorious Beatrice still held the fortress of my mind. For the one [thought] was continually succoured by the sight before it, the other by the memory that lay behind;[5] and the succour of the first increased every day, which was impossible to the other, hindered in every way from looking back. All which appeared

[1] *Vita Nuova*, § 38. See Appendix II. to this chapter.

[2] Ibid., § 39. See Appendix II. to this chapter.

[3] "Among the words of wide significance in the Middle Ages which have come to have a more restricted meaning, there is none to equal the word 'love.' Restricted to-day to the sense of that moral sentiment which unites man to his kind, the further we go back into antiquity the wider its meaning becomes, until it embraces—as *the force of attraction* —everything in the moral and physical order that has been classified by the progress of analysis under the heads of *molecular adhesion, attraction, harmony, dynamic force, magnetism, sympathy, friendship, genius, inclination, devoted study*, and all their species and gradations" (Perez, *La Beatrice Svelata*, p. 64).

[4] See second stanza of the canzone.

[5] "The head, which is the mansion of the soul, has three cells; one in front for learning, one in the middle for knowing, and the third behind for memory" (Tesoro, *Brunetto Latini*, bk. i. ch. 15; and see *Vita Nuova*, § 39, in Appendix II. to this chapter).

to me so marvellous and also so hard to suffer, that I could not endure it; and almost crying out (to excuse myself in this strait, wherein I seemed to lack fortitude), I directed my voice towards the part where my new thought, which was most powerful, as having celestial power, had triumphed, and I began to say—

"Ye who, intelligent, the third heaven guide."

2. For the proper comprehension of the meaning of this canzone, it is necessary first to know its divisions, so that it will be easy afterwards to see its meaning. And that there may be no need of repeating this in the explanation of the others [the other canzoni], I say that the order observed in this book I intend to observe in all the others.

3. I say, then, that the canzone before us is composed of three principal parts. The first part is the first stanza, wherein I have induced to listen to me certain Intelligences, or what we more usually call *angels*, which are [presiding][1] over the revolution of the heaven of Venus, as its motive powers.[2] The second consists of the three stanzas which follow the first, wherein is shown that which within spiritually holds converse with divers thoughts. The third is the fifth and last stanza, in which one generally addresses the poem itself, as it were, to encourage it. And all these three parts, as has been said above, are to be explained in due order.

[1] Interpolated by Witte.

[2] "With the celestial princes we revolve."
(*Par.*, 8. 38.)

"Before the fair flowers were seen, or ever the *motive powers* were established, before the innumerable multitude of angels were gathered together" (2 Esdras vi. 3.) In the first verse of Genesis, the Hebrew word *smim* (translated "heaven" in our version) is said to mean "the *disposers*, or *movers*," and to refer to the planetary Intelligences, or what Dante calls the *motive powers*.

APPENDIX I.

ON THE CYCLE OF VENUS.

"To the comprehension of the address in the first line of the canzone, and many other expressions throughout these poems, a few words on the astronomy of the time are necessary. The Ptolemaic system, as Dante knew it, consisted of ten perfectly concentric heavens. The earth was the fixed and immovable centre of this system, and equally immovable was the outer heaven, or Empyrean, the abode of the blest, by which the universe is surrounded. Its desire towards this dwelling of the Divine lends to the next, the ninth or Crystalline Heaven, the *Primum Mobile*, so rapid a motion, that in spite of its immeasurable circumference it revolves upon its axis in a little over twenty-four hours, and, as we must take notice, carries with it in its circuit all the other eight heavens, without, however, interfering with their special revolutions. Such a special revolution, and, indeed, the slowest of all, of but one degree from west to east in a hundred years, is that of the eighth heaven, in which the fixed stars (numbered at 1022) are set, at equal distances from the earth, and receiving their light from the sun (*Par.*, 20. 6, and 23. 30). And in this movement of the starry heaven all those enclosed by it partake. Then follow the heavens called after the seven planets—Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon; and all these, besides the two movements common to them all, have their own special revolution. . . .

"To the equator of the third heaven, named after the planet Venus, is affixed, not the planet itself, but the invisible central point of an equally invisible circle, which is naturally not concentric with this heaven. It must be noticed that the third and fourth heavens revolve upon their axes in exactly the same time, and that a line drawn from the earth through the central point of the epicycle, affixed to the equator of the third heaven, would exactly hit its planet. This invisible circle, then, is called the epicycle of Venus; it revolves around its central point in 348 days, and to this circle is the planet Venus affixed, while

at the same time she revolves round her own axis. As the central point of this epicycle will always be opposite the sun, it is clear, therefore, that the planet upon its periphery will be for half its revolution upon one side of the sun, and for the other half upon the other side, and therefore will appear now as the morning, and then as the evening, star.

"It is, however, no inanimate gravity which impels the manifold motions of these heavenly bodies; each one is occasioned by the will of a supernatural being, an angel, an Intelligence.

> 'These orders all gaze upward into heaven,
> And so prevail below, that unto God
> They all attracted are, and all attract.'

They are the inhabitants of each separate heaven, and the motion of the planets is no other than the force of the thought of these holy spirits. Their power exerts that influence upon the earth that the astrologers often superficially ascribed to the planets and constellations themselves—an influence that imparts certain tendencies and inclinations to man, but which, through his exclusive privilege of free-will, can be combated and overcome.

"The Intelligences of the Heaven of Venus, then, as their special province, contemplate the Divine Love, and sow the seeds of earthly love, more or less holy in its nature, wherever here below the rays of their planet may fall. And their number is equal to that of the motions of their planet, that is *four*. To them the poet addresses himself in this canzone, because he can only explain this new love of his, so contrary to all the resolutions of his heart, as occasioned by their mighty influence, and therefore he seeks for their compassion first of all.

"If, as Dante himself has suggested, we consider this love in its allegorical sense, his appeal to the rulers of this heaven takes another meaning. Our poet, namely, compares the heavens to the sciences, and those of the seven planets to the sciences of the *Trivium* and *Quadrivium*, the starry heaven to Physics and Metaphysics, the crystalline to Moral Philosophy, and the empyrean to Theology. To Venus, in this division, falls Rhetoric, and therefore the masters of this art can be considered, in an allegorical sense, as the rulers of this planet." (Karl Witte, *Dante's Lyrische Gedichte.*)

APPENDIX II.

FROM THE "VITA NUOVA."

[Page 73, note 1.] § 35. "In that day which completed the year since my lady had been made one of the citizens of eternal life, I was sitting in a place where, recalling her to mind, I drew an angel upon certain tablets."

[Page 73, note 5.] § 36. "Wherefore I, being conscious of my agitation, raised my eyes to see if others noticed me, and I saw a noble (gentil) lady, young and very beautiful, who was gazing upon me from a window with such pitiful looks that it seemed as if the whole of pity were summed up in her. Whence, seeing that the sorrowful, when they behold the compassion of others, are soonest moved to weep, as if they pitied themselves, I felt my eyes filling with tears; and therefore, fearing that I should show my weakness, I took myself out of the sight of that gentle lady; saying afterwards within myself, 'It cannot be but that with that compassionate lady doth abide most noble love.'"

§ 37. "It happened after this that, whenever I saw this lady, her face grew pitiful and pale as with love; whereby she reminded me many times of my most noble lady, who seemed to me of a like paleness. And certainly often, not being able to weep or to ease my sadness, I went to look upon this lady, the sight of whom seemed to draw the tears from my eyes."

§ 38. "I went so often to look upon this lady, that my eyes began to take too much delight in beholding her; wherefore I was often vexed with myself, and reproached myself as base, and often cursed the vanity [inconstancy] of my eyes, and said to them in my thought, 'Once ye were wont by your dolorous condition to make whoso beheld it weep, and now it seems ye wish to forget it, for sake of this lady who looketh upon you, and who would not do so but for sorrow for that glorified lady whom ye used to mourn.' . . . And that the battle which went on within me might not remain unknown save to the wretched one who endured it, I determined to write a sonnet."

§ 39. "The sight of this lady brought me into so novel a

condition, that I often thought of her as a person who pleased me too well, and I thought of her thus : 'This is a noble lady, young, beautiful, and wise, and perhaps shown to me by the will of Love, that my life might find peace.' And I thought of her many times more fondly, so that my heart consented within itself, that is, to my reasoning. But when it had thus consented, I seemed to think the contrary, as if moved by reason, and said within myself, 'Alas! what thought is this, that in such base fashion would console me, and will scarce let me think anything else?' Then another thought arose, and said, 'Now, seeing that thou hast suffered so much tribulation through love, why wilt thou not withdraw thyself from such bitterness?'"

[Dante Gabriel Rossetti, in his translation of the *Vita Nuova*, suggests that "the lady at the window" may have been the Gemma Donati whom Dante married, in spite of the interpretation which he admits in the *Convito*, "believing always in the existence of the actual events, even where the allegorical superstructure has been raised by Dante himself." (*Dante and his Circle*, p. 110.)]

Chapter III.

1. For the better understanding of that literal meaning with which we are now concerned, we must know (in the first part as above divided) who and how many are they who are called to be my audience, and what that third heaven is, which they are said to guide. And first I will speak of the heaven, and afterwards of them whom I address. And although we may know with certainty very little of these things, nevertheless that portion which the human reason may apprehend [1] gives more delight than all

[1] "And he to me. What reason seeth here
Myself can tell thee; beyond that await
For Beatrice, since 'tis a work of faith."
(*Purg.*, 18. 46.

the many and certain things of which we judge by the senses, according to the opinion of the Philosopher in his book on *Animals.*

2. I say, then, that there are many different opinions as to the number and position of the heavens, although at last the truth be found. Aristotle (following only the ancient ignorance of the astrologers) believed that there were only eight heavens, of which the outer one, containing all the rest, was that of the Fixed Stars, that is, the eighth sphere; and that beyond that was none other. And he also believed that the Heaven of the Sun [1] was next to that of the Moon, that is, next but one to us. And this very erroneous opinion of his may be seen by whoso chooses in the second [book] *Of the Heavens and Earth.* However, he excuses himself in the twelfth of the *Metaphysics*,[2] where he shows that he only followed the opinion of others where he had to speak of astrology.[3]

3. Ptolemy afterwards, perceiving that the eighth sphere had more than one motion [4] (seeing that its revolution varied from the true circuit, which turns only from east to west), and constrained by the principles of philosophy (which necessarily demanded a perfectly simple *Primum Mobile*[5]), supposed another

[1] "The greatest of the ministers of nature,
Who with the power of heaven the world imprints
And measures with his light the time for us."
(*Par.*, 10. 28.)

[2] In the second chapter.

[3] Astrology and astronomy were synonymous in the time of Dante.

[4] Seeing that the eighth heaven (that of the Fixed Stars) had more than one motion, and his philosophy demanding an absolutely simple *Primum Mobile*, etc.

[5] "The heaven which circles all."
(*Inf.*, 9. 29.)
"The heaven that all the rest outspeeds."
(*Par.*, 13. 24.)

heaven to exist beyond that of the Fixed Stars, which made this revolution from east to west. This revolution, I say, was completed in about twenty-four hours, that is, in twenty-three hours and fourteen parts of the fifteen of another [hour], roughly calculated.[1] So that according to him, and according to that which is received in astrology and in philosophy since these movements were seen, the movable heavens are nine; and their position is plain and determined, as the art of perspective, arithmetic, and geometry[2] proves to our senses and our reason, and of which our senses have other testimony; as in solar eclipses[3] we can plainly see that the moon is below the sun; and also by the testimony of Aristotle, who saw with his own eyes (as he says in the second *Of the Heavens and Earth*) the new moon entering below Mars, on the unlighted side, and Mars remaining concealed until it reappeared on the other illuminated side of the moon, which was towards the west.[4]

Chapter IV.

1. And the order of position [of the heavens] is this, that the first one enumerated is that where the Moon is; the second that where Mercury is; the

[1] That is, in twenty-three hours and fourteen fifteenths, which is equivalent to twenty-three hours and fifty-six minutes, the duration of the sidereal revolution as expressed in solar time.

[2] See *Conv.*, ii. 14, pars. 9 and 11.

[3] "In the sun's eclipse
It would be manifest."
(*Par.*, 2. 79.)

[4] Whereby Dante wishes to prove that the Heaven of the Moon is below (that is, inferior to) the Heaven of Mars.

third that where Venus is; the fourth that where the Sun is; the fifth that where Mars is; the sixth that where Jupiter is; the seventh that where Saturn is; the eighth that where the Fixed Stars are;[1] the ninth is that which is not perceptible to sense (except by the motion spoken of above), and which is called by many the Crystalline,[2] that is, the diaphanous, or wholly transparent. However, beyond all these, the Catholics[3] place the Empyrean Heaven,[4] which is as much as to say the Heaven of *Flame*, or *Luminous*[5] Heaven; and they hold it to be immovable,[6] because it has within itself, in every part, that which its matter demands.[7] And this is the reason that the *Primum Mobile* moves with immense velocity; because the fervent longing of all its parts to be united to those of this [tenth and][8] most divine and quiet heaven, makes it revolve with so much desire that its velocity

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[1] "And many lights the eighth heaven shows to you."
(*Par.*, 2. 64.)

[2] "And in this heaven there is no other where
Than in the Mind Divine."
(*Par.*, 17. 109.)

[3] The word "catholic" is sometimes used by Dante in the sense of "the pious," or "the believers" in the place assigned by the Church to beatified spirits. In *Conv.*, iv. 6, par. 8, it is used in the sense of "general."

[4] See *Par.*, 1. 4—
"Within that heaven that most His light receives;"
and—
"The heaven that all the others doth precede."
(*Par.*, 13. 24.)

[5] See *Ep. to Can Grande*, par. 24. [6] Ibid. 26.

[7] Dante's theory being that all motion results from desire of perfection in an incomplete thing. "Everything which moves is defective" (*Ep. to Can Grande*, p. 26). See *Par.*, 1. 76—
"When now the wheel, which thou dost make eternal
In its desire for thee," etc.

[8] Interpolation of Witte.

is almost incomprehensible.[1] And this quiet and peaceful heaven[2] is the abode of that Supreme Deity who alone doth perfectly behold Himself.[3] This is the abode of the beatified spirits, according to the holy Church, who cannot lie; and Aristotle also seems to think so, if rightly understood, in the first of *The Heavens and Earth.* This is the supreme edifice of the universe,[4] in which all the world is included, and beyond which is nothing; and it is not in space, but was formed solely in the Primal Mind,[5] which the Greeks called *Protonoe.* This is that magnificence of which the Psalmist spake, when he says to God, "Thy magnificence is exalted above the heavens."[6] And thus, summing up what has been here discussed, it

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[1] "Of that world which most fervent is, and living."
(*Par.*, 23. 113.)
"Know thou that its motion is so swift
Through burning love, whereby it is spurred on."
(*Par.*, 28. 44.)

[2] "Within the heaven of the Peace Divine."
(*Par.*, 2. 112.)
"The heaven for ever quiet."
(*Par.*, 1. 122; *Ep. to Can Grande*, par. 25.)

[3] *Conv.*, ii. 6, par. 4; and *Par.*, 19. 50—
"That Good
Which has no end, and by itself is measured."

[4] "That that heaven may house you
That full of love is, with the amplest space."
(*Purg.*, 26. 62.

[5] "Not circumscribed, and all things circumscribing."
(*Par.*, 14. 30.)
"Wherefore I pray the Mind in which begin
Thy motion and thy virtue."
(*Par.*, 18. 118.)
"Some rays of that Mind
With which all things existing are replete."
(*Par.*, 19. 53.)

[6] Ps. viii. 1. In the English version, "Thou hast set Thy glory above the heavens."

seems that there are ten heavens, of which that of Venus is the third; and this will be spoken of in the place where I intend to explain it.

2. And we must know that each heaven below the Crystalline has two poles, fixed as regards itself; and the ninth has them firm and fixed and immutable [1] as regards everything else; and each one, the ninth as well as the rest, has a circle which may be called the equator [2] of its own heaven, and which in every part of its revolution is equally distant from either pole, as may be readily seen by twirling an apple or any other round thing. And this circle in every heaven has greater swiftness of movement than any other part of that heaven, as may be seen by whoso considers it well. And the nearer each part [to the equator], the more swiftly it moves; the more remote (and the nearer the poles), the more slowly; [3] because its revolution is smaller, and is of necessity to be accomplished in the same time with the greater. I say, moreover, that the nearer the heaven is to the equatorial circle, the more noble it is in comparison with its poles; [4] because it has more motion, and more actuality, and more life,[5] and more form, and is nearer

[1] "The nature of that motion which keeps quiet
The centre, and all the rest about it moves,
From here begins as from its starting-point."
(*Par.*, 27. 106.)

[2] "The mid-circle of supernal motion
Which in one art is the Equator called."
(*Purg.*, 4. 79.)

[3] "That point where slowest are the stars,
Even as a wheel at nearest to its axle."
(*Purg.*, 8. 86.)

[4] That is, the star is set in the noblest part of its own heaven.

[5] "That part where the world is most alive."
(*Par.*, 5. 87.)

to that which is above it, and has consequently more virtue. Therefore the stars of the Heaven of the Fixed Stars have more virtue among themselves as they are nearer to this circle.

3. And at the summit of this circle, in the Heaven of Venus, of which we now treat, is a little sphere which revolves of itself in this heaven, whose orbit the astronomers call *epicycle*.[1] And as the greater sphere revolves round two poles, so also does this little one; and it has also its equatorial circle, and its parts also are nobler as they are nearer to this; and above the arc or summit[2] of this circle is fixed that most brilliant star Venus. And although we have said that there are ten heavens, according to strict truth this number does not comprehend them all; because the one just mentioned, that is, the epicycle in which this star is fixed, is a heaven, or rather sphere, by itself: and is not of one essence with that which carries it, although it has more in common with it than with the others, and is likewise called a heaven, and both are called after the star. How it may be with the other heavens and the other stars, we have not at present to discuss; let that suffice which has been told of the truth concerning the third heaven, with which I am concerned now, and which has been sufficiently explained for the present.

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[1] "The world used in its peril to believe
That the fair Cypria delirious love
Rayed out, in the third epicycle turning."
(*Par.*, 8. 1.)

[2] Swedenborg says, "There are angels who do not live consociated, but separate, house and house; these dwell in the *midst* of heaven, because they are the best of angels."

CHAPTER V.

1. SINCE it has been demonstrated in the preceding chapter what this third heaven is, and how it is ordered within itself, it remains to show who they are who move it. Therefore be it known, in the first place, that these are Substances separate from matter, that is, Intelligences, whom the common people call Angels. And of these creatures,[1] as of the heavens, different [writers] have held different opinions, although the truth is now known. There were certain philosophers, among whom seems to have been Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*[2] (although in the first of the *Heaven and Earth* he appears incidentally to think otherwise), who believed that there were only as many of these [Intelligences] as there were circulations of the heavens, and no more; saying that other than these would exist eternally in vain, without effectuality; which were impossible, seeing that their being consists in their effectuality.

2. There were others like Plato, a most excellent man, who maintained that there are not only as many Intelligences as there are motions of the heavens, but also as many as there are kinds of things;[3] such as one kind for all men, another for

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[1] "Mine eye perceived those *creatures* beautiful."
(*Purg.*, 31. 77.)
"Among the other primal *creatures* gladsome."
(For a full description of the angelic hosts, see *Par.*, 28. 94, etc.)

[2] Bk. ii. ch. 8.

[3] Fraticelli adds, "or manner of things," which Giuliani omits, as not found in the best texts.

gold, another for treasures,[1] and so on; and they say that as the Intelligences are the generators of these [motions], each of its own,[2] so these other [Intelligences] are the generators of all other things, and the exemplars each of their own kind; and Plato calls them *Ideas*,[3] which is as much as to say *forms*, and *universal natures*. The heathen called them gods and goddesses (although they had not so philosophical an understanding of them as Plato had), and adored their images, and built to them great temples—as to Juno, whom they called the goddess of power; to Vulcan, whom they called the god of fire; to Pallas, or Minerva, whom they called the goddess of wisdom; and to Ceres, whom they called the goddess of grain. To which opinions the poets bear witness, having described to some extent the manner of the heathen, as to their sacrifices and their faith; and we see the same [ideas] in many of the ancient names, which remain either as names or appellations of places and ancient edifices, as may be readily seen by whoever chooses.

3. And although the above opinions were well grounded upon human reason, and no little experience,[4] the truth was not yet seen of them [the

[1] The *Cod. Vat.*, 3332, reads *richezze*, which may be interpreted "treasures," as precious stones and the like. Fraticelli reads *argento*, "silver." (See *Inf.*, 7. 74, on Fortune as presiding over riches.)

[2] "He whose great wisdom everything transcends,
Made all the heavens, and gave their guides to each."
(*Inf.*, 7. 73.)

[3] "Plato termed such things among entities, Ideas; and asserted that all things are styled sensible according as they were different from these or as they subsisted in accordance with these" (Aristotle, *Met.*, bk. i. ch. 6).

[4] Giuliani wishes to read *science* here, and Fraticelli and Pederzini *wisdom*.

heathen], both through fault of reason and fault of teaching; because by reason alone we can see that the aforesaid creatures are much more numerous than are those effects of theirs which men are able to understand. And one reason is this: no one doubts, neither philosopher, nor heathen, nor Jew, nor Christian, nor any other sect,[1] that they [these creatures] are full of all blessedness—all, or the greater part;[2] and that the state of these blessed ones is most perfect. Whence, as that which is here [in this world] human nature has not only one beatitude but two,[3] that of the social [or active] and that of the contemplative life, it would be irrational for us to consider these [celestial creatures] as having the blessedness of active, that is, social life, in the government of the world, and not as having that of the contemplative, the which is more excellent and more divine. And because they who have the beatitude of government cannot have the other also,

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[1] "Made me disparage all the other sects."
(*Purg.*, 22. 87.)
"And pledged me to the pathway of her sect."
(*Par.*, 3. 105.)

[2] With which correction Dante saves himself from a denial of the dogma of the fallen angels (see *Par.*, 29. 49, *et seqq.*, for his account of their fall).

[3] Perhaps this explanation of the two beatitudes will apply to § 18 of the *Vita Nuova*, where Dante says to the ladies who question him, "Ladies, the object of my love was indeed the salutation of this lady, of which perhaps you are speaking, and in which was that beatitude that was the end of all my desires. But since it has pleased her to deny it to me, my master Love, out of his mercy, has placed all my beatitude in that which cannot fail me." In *Conv.*, iii. 15, Dante says that he means by the "disdain" or "cruelty" of his lady, his incapacity to understand the *persuasions* and *demonstrations* of Philosophy; the former figured by her *smile*, the latter by the glance of her *eyes* (see note to *Conv.*, iv. 22, par. 6).

because their intellect is one and perpetual,[1] there must be others apart from this ministry, who live solely in contemplation. And because this life is more divine, and the more divine a thing is the more it resembles God,[2] it is evident that this life is more beloved of God; and if more beloved, the greater hath been His bounty[3] to it; and the greater His bounty, the more living creatures hath He given to this life than to the other. By which we conclude that the number of those whose effect is not evident,[4] is very much the larger. And this is not contradicted by what Aristotle seems to say in the tenth of the *Ethics;* since with the Substances separate [from matter], although the contemplative life alone is theirs, nevertheless the revolution of the heaven [to which they belong] is influenced by the contemplation of certain of them, and this revolution governs the world,[5] which [world] is, as it were, a social order thought out in the contemplation of these motive powers.

4. The other reason is,[6] that no effect is greater

[1] That is, their nature has one unchanging purpose.

[2] "The holy ardour that illumines all things,
Shines brightest in the things most like Itself."
(*Par.*, 7. 74.)

[3] *Beatanza*, which Fraticelli says is used nowhere else by Dante, he interprets as "beatitude;" but Giuliani, with greater reason, it seems to me, considers it equivalent to "goodness" or "bounty."

[4] That is, who have no active life.

[5] This is one of the many passages hopelessly muddled by copyists and commentators. The sense seems to be, that the statement that there are active Intelligences is not contradicted by Aristotle, when he says (*Ethics*, bk. x. ch. 11) that "the energy of the Deity, as it surpasses all others in blessedness, must be contemplative," because although the real life of those Intelligences *is* the contemplative life, yet through their contemplation they influence the movement of that heaven which governs the world.

[6] The other reason for saying that these contemplative Intelligences are the more numerous.

than its cause; because the cause cannot give what it does not possess. Whence, seeing that the Divine Intelligence is the cause of all things, and above all of human intelligence, the human cannot exceed the Divine, but is out of all proportion exceeded by it;[1] therefore if we for the above reason, and for many others, can conceive that God could have made almost innumerable spiritual creatures, it is evident that He has made these [contemplative Intelligences] in greater number.[2] Many other reasons may be seen, but let these suffice for the present.

5. And let no one wonder if these and other reasons that we might give are not entirely plain; because we should none the less admire their[3] excellence (which exceeds the vision of the human mind, as the Philosopher says, in the second of the *Metaphysics*[4]), and should affirm their existence. Although having no perception of them by our senses whence our knowledge has its beginning, nevertheless within our intelligence there shines something of the light[5] of their most fertile[6] essence,[7] in which we see

[1] "Hence is it manifest each minor nature
Is scant receptacle unto that Good
Which has no end, and by itself is measured."
(*Par.*, 19. 49.)

[2] Pederzini remarks that, with all due deference to Dante, he has not proved his argument here; for it is not all that God *could* make that exists, but only what He *intends* should exist.

[3] That is, the excellence of these Intelligences.

[4] "As the eyes of bats are to the light that follows the dawn of day, so also is the mind of our souls to those things which, above all, are naturally the most splendid" (*Met.*, bk. i., "The Less," ch. i.).

[5] "Well I perceive how is already shining
Into thine intellect the eternal light
That only seen enkindles always love."
(*Par.*, 5. 7.)

[6] For *vivace*, in the sense of "fertile," see also *Purg.*, 32. 137.

[7] This passage seems to show Dante's belief in spiritual intuition.

the above-named reasons and many others, as a man with closed eyes may assert the air to be luminous through some slight radiance [that he perceives], like the ray that penetrates the pupils of the bat;[1] for in no otherwise are closed our intellectual eyes, as long as our soul is bound and imprisoned by the organs of our body.[2]

CHAPTER VI.

1. WE have said that for want of instruction the ancients knew not the truth concerning spiritual beings, although the people of Israel were taught it in part by their prophets, through whom by many a mode of speech and in divers manners God spake to them, as the Apostle says.[3] But we have been instructed therein by Him who came from that God; by Him who created them [the angels]; by Him who preserves them; that is, by the Emperor[4] of the

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[1] See note 4 to p. 73, where we may see of what Dante was thinking when he wrote this passage. In the beginning of the seventeenth canto of *Purgatory*, he uses the mole as an instance of imperfect sight, showing that he knew better than to believe it *blind*—

"Remember, reader, if e'er in the Alps
A mist o'ertook thee, through which thou
Could'st only see as moles can, through their film."

[2] "Even as the soul within your dust
Through members different and accommodated
To faculties diverse."

(*Par.*, 2. 133.)

"That swathing band
Which death unwindeth."

(*Purg.*, 16. 37.)

[3] Heb. i. 1.

[4] "That Emperor who reigns above."

(*Inf.*, 1. 124.)

"The Emperor who reigneth evermore."

(*Par.*, 12. 40.)

universe, which is Christ, Son of the sovereign God and Son of the Virgin Mary (very woman,[1] and daughter of Joachim and Anna), very Man, who was put to death by us; through which [death] we received life.[2] Who was the Light that shineth for us in darkness, as John the Evangelist says,[3] and who taught us the truth concerning those things which without Him we could not have known, nor have seen truly. The first thing and the first secret that He showed us, was one of the aforesaid creatures; it was that great Legate who came to Mary, a youthful maiden of thirteen years, sent by the celestial Senate.[4]

2. Our Saviour said with His own lips that the Father could give Him many legions of angels.[5] Nor did He deny it, when it was said to Him that the Father had commanded the angels to minister unto Him and serve Him.[6] Therefore it is proved to us that these creatures exist in immense numbers; because His Spouse and Secretary, the Holy Church (of whom Solomon says,[7] "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, full of delights, leaning upon her Beloved?"), says, believes, and preaches that these

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[1] Here Dante apparently wishes to refute the doctrine of some of the Arians of his day, who carried their docetism so far that they not only denied the reality of the body of Christ, but also of that of the Virgin.

[2] "The death which He endured that I may live."
(*Par.*, 26. 59.)

[3] John i. 5.

[4] In some of the texts we have *Senatore*, in some *Salvatore*, evidently a mistake for *Senato*, or *Consistory* (see *Conv.*, iv. 5, par. 2).

[5] Matt. xxvi. 53.

[6] Matt. iv. 6, 11.

[7] Solomon's Song viii. 5, "full of delights," is not in the English version (see *De Monarchia*, iii. 10, where Dante quotes the same passage).

most noble creatures are almost innumerable ;[1] and she divides them into three hierarchies, that is to say, three holy, or rather divine, principalities; and each hierarchy has three orders ; so that the Church holds and maintains that there are nine orders of spiritual creatures.

3. The first is that of the Angels, the second that of the Archangels, the third of the Thrones ;[2] and these three orders make the first hierarchy ;[3]

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[1] "This nature doth so multiply itself
In numbers, that there never yet was speech
Nor mortal fancy that could go so far."
(*Par.*, 29. 130.)

And Dante refers to Dan. vii. 10, "Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him."

[2] "Those other Loves that round about them go,
Thrones of the countenance divine are called."
(*Par.*, 28. 103.)

"Above us there are mirrors, Thrones you call them,
From which shines out on us God judicant."
(*Par.*, 9. 61.)

St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theol.*, 108. 5) says, "The order of Thrones excels the inferior orders in this, that it has the power of perceiving immediately in God the reasons of the Divine operations."

[3] In his order of the celestial hierarchies, Dante here follows more nearly the system of St. Gregory the Great, but in the *Commedia* that of St. Dionysius the Areopagite (and of St. Thomas Aquinas), whence Giuliani concludes that Dante must have written (the twenty-eighth canto of) the *Paradiso* after the *Convito*. The three systems are given thus by Scartazzini—

Dionysius.	Gregory.	Dante in "Convito."
First hierarchy.	*First hierarchy.*	*First hierarchy.*
Seraphim	Seraphim	Seraphim
Cherubim	Cherubim	Cherubim
Thrones	Thrones	Powers
Second hierarchy.	*Second hierarchy.*	*Second hierarchy.*
Dominations	Dominations	Principalities
Virtues	Principalities	Virtues
Powers	Powers	Dominations
Third hierarchy.	*Third hierarchy.*	*Third hierarchy.*
Principalities	Virtues	Thrones
Archangels	Archangels	Archangels
Angels	Angels	Angels

This list begins with the highest order, whereas Dante begins, as he

not the first as to nobility, nor as to creation (for the others are more noble, and all were created together), but first as regards our ascent to their height. Then come the Dominions, then the Virtues, then the Principalities; and these form the second [1] hierarchy. Above these are the Powers and the Cherubim, and highest of all are the Seraphim; and these are the third hierarchy. And the number in which the hierarchies are, and that in which the orders are, forms the principal subject of their [these angels'] contemplation. For as the Divine Majesty consists of Three Persons, which have One Substance,[2] it may be contemplated by them in a threefold manner. For the supreme Power of the Father may be contemplated, which the first hierarchy beholds; that is, the first in order of nobility, and which we count as last. And the supreme Wisdom of the Son may be contemplated; and this the second hierarchy beholds. And the supreme and most fervent Love [3] of the Holy Spirit may be contemplated; and this the third hierarchy beholds, which, being nearer to us,

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explains here, with the lowest, or nearest to humanity (see Longfellow's note to *Par.*, 28. 103).

[1] Dionysius placed in the *first* hierarchy (see note, *ante*) those whose names were given them in reference to God, in the *second* those whose names designate a certain common government or disposition, and in the *third* those whose names designate the execution of the work (see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.*, 108. 6).

[2] "The pathway infinite
Which follows the One Substance in Three Persons."
(*Purg.*, 3. 35.)

[3] "Divine Omnipotence,
The highest Wisdom, and the primal Love."
(*Inf.*, 3. 5.)

Here, says Scartazzini, Dante follows St. Thomas Aquinas, who attributes Omnipotence to the Father, Wisdom to the Son, and Goodness (or Love) to the Holy Spirit.

gives us of the gifts that it receives. And as each Person in the Divine Trinity may be considered in a threefold manner, there are in each hierarchy three orders that contemplate it in a different way. The Father may be considered in respect to Himself alone; and this forms the contemplation of the Seraphim,[1] who have a more perfect vision of the First Cause than any other angelic nature. The Father may be considered in His relation to the Son, that is, as to how He withdraws Himself from Him, or unites Himself to Him; and this is the contemplation of the Cherubim. Again, the Father may be considered according as the Holy Spirit proceedeth from Him, as to how He withdraws from it, or unites Himself to it; and this is the contemplation of the Powers. And in the same way they may meditate on the Son and on the Holy Spirit.

4. Wherefore there must needs be nine orders of contemplating spirits, gazing upon that Light which can only be perfectly beheld by Itself.[2] Nor is this the place to keep silent on one point. I say that out of all these orders many [spirits] were lost[3] as soon as created,[4] perhaps the tenth part of their number,

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[1] "He of the Seraphim most absorbed in God."
(*Par.*, 4. 28.)

[2] "O Light Eterne, sole in Thyself that dwellest,
Sole knowest Thyself."
(*Par.*, 33. 124.)

[3] "The occasion of their fall was the accursed
Presumption of that One."
(*Par.*, 29. 55.)

[4] "Nor could one reach, in counting, unto twenty
So swiftly, as a portion of these angels
Disturbed the lowest of the elements [the earth]."
(*Par.*, 29. 49.)

to supply which [loss] humanity was then created. The numbers, the orders, the hierarchies, are recounted by the movable heavens, which are nine; and the tenth [heaven] announces the unity and stability of God. And therefore the psalmist says,[1] "The heavens recount the glory of God, and the firmament announceth the work of His hands."

5. Wherefore it is reasonable to believe that the motive powers of the Heaven of the Moon are of the order of Angels; and those of Mercury, Archangels; and those of Venus are the Thrones,[2] which, informed with the love of the Holy Spirit, perform their work, that is, the movement of this heaven filled with love, according to the nature of that love. From which [movement] the form of this heaven derives a potent ardour, by which souls here below are inspired to love, according to their dispositions. And because the ancients perceived that this heaven was the cause of love here below, they said that Love was the son of Venus, as Virgil testified in the first of the *Æneid*, where Venus says to Love, "My son, my strength, son of the Supreme Father, who carest not for the darts of Typhœus;"[3] and Ovid, in the fifth of the

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[1] Ps. xix. 1. Dante quotes, of course, from the Vulgate.

[2] "The beauteous planet that to love incites."
(*Purg.*, I. 19.)
In *Par.*, 8. 34, Dante puts "the celestial Princes," instead of the Thrones, as the movers of the Heaven of Venus."

[3] Here Fraticelli says, with all due reverence, that Dante has made two mistakes in translating the verse, "Gnate, patris summi qui tela Typhœa temnis;" for Virgil did not mean that Cupid was the son of Jove, and the epithet "*Typhœan* darts" meant the darts used against Typhœus, Cupid taking the name of his conquered foe as Scipio took that of Africanus. Dryden has it—

"My son, my strength, whose mighty power alone
Controls the Thunderer on his awful throne."

Metamorphoses, when he says that Venus said to Love, "My son, my arms, my strength."[1]

6. And these Thrones, which are allotted to the government of this heaven, are not many in number, and the astrologers differ about their number, according to their differences about the revolutions [of this heaven], although all are agreed in this, that their number is equal to that of these revolutions; which, according to the *Book of the Aggregation of the Stars* (wherein the best demonstrations of the astrologers are summed up), are three: one by which the star revolves within its epicycle,[2] the second by which the epicycle and the whole heaven [of Venus] revolves equally with that of the Sun,[3] and the third by which all that heaven revolves, following the motion of the stellar sphere from west to east, one degree in a hundred years. So that for these three motions are three motive powers.

7. Again, all this heaven moves and revolves with the epicycle from east to west, once in every day; which movement, whether it be caused by some Intelligence, or by the rush of the *Primum Mobile*,[4] God knows, for to me it seems presumptuous to judge. These motive Powers guide by their thought alone the revolutions over which each one presides. The most noble form of the heaven, having within itself this principle of passivity, revolves at the touch

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[1] Ovid, *Met.*, bk. v. 3.

[2] See *Conv.*, ii. 4, par. 3.

[3] The old astronomers considered that the Heaven of Venus revolved in the same time as that of the sun, *i.e.* 365 days.

[4] "The one which sweeps along with it
The universe sublime."
(*Par.*, 28. 70.)

of the motive force willing it so to move,[1] and I say *touch*, not in a corporeal sense, of the power that is brought to bear on it.[2] And these motive Powers are they who are understood to be addressed, and to whom I speak.

CHAPTER VII.

1. AS we have already said in the third chapter of this book, for the proper understanding of the foregoing canzone it was necessary to speak of these heavens, and of their motive Powers; and in the three preceding chapters this has been done. I say, then, to those whom I have shown as guiding the Heaven of Venus, "*Ye who, intelligent*" (that is, through the intellect alone, as was said before), "*the third heaven guide, Hear that discourse;*" and I do not say *hear* because they are capable of perceiving sounds, for they have no senses; but I say *hear* that they may listen with what power of hearing they do possess, which is purely of the intellect. I say, "*Hear that discourse I hold within my heart,*" that is, within me, because there has been as yet no outward sign of it. And be it known that throughout this canzone, whether taken in the one sense or the other,[3] the

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[1] "The power and motion of the holy spheres,
As from the smith doth come the hammer's craft,
Must by these blessèd motors be informed."
(*Par.*, 2. 127.)

[2] Or, as others read, "I say touch, not in a corporeal sense, of as much power as is brought to bear on it."

[3] That is the literal meaning, or the allegorical, the latter, as Dante tells us, often comprising the *moral* and the *mystical*.

heart[1] means the inmost secret [thought], and not any other special part of the soul or the body.

2. After I have called them to listen to what I wish to say, I assign two reasons why it is fitting that I should speak to them; one is the strangeness of my condition, which, not having been experienced by other men, could not be understood by them as it could by those who understand the effects they produce in their operation.[2] And I touch upon this reason when I say, "*To none else can I speak, so strange it seems.*"

3. The other reason is this. When a man receives benefits or injuries, he ought to relate them first to him who is the cause of them, if possible, rather than to others; so that in the case of a benefit, the receiver may show himself grateful towards his benefactor; and if an injury, that he may with gentle words move

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[1] "Good Leader, I but keep concealed
From thee my heart that I may speak the less."
(*Inf.*, 10. 19.)

"We should take notice," says Renier, "that the word 'mind,' in its common significance, expresses the mere union of the active intelligence with the possible intellect, upon which depends the personal intellectuality. On the other hand, the *heart* was considered solely as the receptacle of the life of the affections, except that, as the vulgar still think, one of its cavities (called *the lake of the heart* in the *Commedia*, *Inf.*, 1. 20) was the seat of the spirits of life" (the vital principle). Boccaccio says, "There is in the heart a certain concave part, always abounding in blood, where, according to the opinion of some people, the vital spirits abide, and whence, as from a perpetual fount, that blood and that heat flow into the veins which is distributed through all the body; and this part is the receptacle of all our passions." As Dante is most particular in his use of words, he warns us that *in this canzone* he uses the word "heart" in a special sense—that of his *secret thought;* while the *mind*, as he tells us in *Conv.*, iii. 2, is "the ultimate and noblest part of the soul."

[2] That is, by the spirits who understand the results of their own work.

him who has done the injury to be merciful. And I touch upon this reason when I say, "*That heaven which follows, obedient to your will, Celestial creatures, whither ye direct, Hath brought me to my present low estate;*" that is to say, your influence, that is, the revolution you produce, is what has brought me to my present condition. Wherefore I conclude and say, that my speech ought to be addressed to them, as has been said; and this I say here, "*Wherefore, would I bemoan the life I lead, To ye, high Powers, befits it that I turn.*"

4. And having assigned these reasons, I beg them to listen to me, when I say, "*Therefore, I pray ye, listen to my prayer.*" But because in every kind of discourse the speaker ought to think of persuading, that is, of *charming*, his audience,[1] and that which is the first of all persuasions, as the rhetoricians assert, is the most potent of any to render the listener attentive, the promising to relate new and great things, therefore I follow up my prayer for an audience with this persuasion, announcing to them my intention to relate *new* things, that is, the conflict in my soul; and *great* things, that is, of the power of their star. And this I say in the last words of this first part: "*And I will tell, how late within my heart My sorrowing soul bewept her heavy fate, And how a spirit came to strive with her, Borne on the shining rays of your bright star.*"

5. And that these words may be fully understood, I would say that this *spirit* is no other than a frequent

[1] Dante himself never forgets this rule, says Giuliani, as we may see in the opening of each of the divisions of the *Commedia* where he announces his subject (see *Inf.*, 2. 7; *Purg.*, 1. 4; and *Par.*, 1. 10).

thought to praise and glorify this new lady; and this *soul* is no other than another thought, which, with [my] consent opposing the first one, praises and glorifies the memory of that glorious Beatrice. But because, moreover, the ultimate feeling of my mind, which is this consent,[1] clings to this thought, which has the aid of memory, I have called it *the soul*, and the other *a spirit;* as we are wont to call "the city" only those who hold it, not those who attack it, even were they also its citizens.

6. I say also that this spirit is borne upon the rays of the star, because it should be known that the rays of every heaven are the way[2] by which its influence descends upon things here below.[3] And because the rays are no other than a light which comes from the source of light through the air to the thing illuminated, and light there is none save from the side of the star, because the other heaven is diaphanous (that is, transparent), I do not say that this spirit (that is, this thought) comes from their

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[1] Giuliani reads, "the strongest power of my mind, which with consent," etc. *Ultimate* in the sense of "most intimate" (see next chapter, end of par. 4).

[2] *Conv.*, iii. 14, par. 1.

"The fair Cipria delirious love
Rayed out."

(*Par.*, 8. 2.)

"The other spheres, by various differences,
All the distinctions which they have within them,
Dispose unto their ends and their effects."

(*Par.*, 2. 118.)

[3] "Created was the forming influence
Within these stars that round about them go.
The soul of every brute and every plant
By its potential temperament attracts
The ray and motion of the holy lights."

(*Par.*, 7. 137.)

heaven in general, but from their star. Which, by the nobility of its motive Powers, is of such virtue, that it has the greatest power over our souls and all other things belonging to us; notwithstanding that its distance from us at its nearest point is one hundred and sixty-seven times that to the centre of the earth,[1] which is three thousand two hundred and fifty miles. And this is the literal exposition of the first part of the canzone.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. ENOUGH of the meaning of the first part may be understood by what has already been said; therefore the second part has to be explained, in which is shown what I experienced within myself in the battle [of these conflicting thoughts]. And this part has two divisions; for in the first, that is, the first verse, I relate the nature of this diversity [of my thoughts], according to their origin within me; and afterwards relate that which was said by either conflicting spirit. And I will tell first what was said by the side that lost; that is, in the verse which is the second of this part, and the third of the canzone.

2. In evidence, therefore, of the meaning of the first division, be it known that things should be denominated from the supreme nobility of their form;[2] as man from his reason, and not from his senses, nor from any less noble thing. Therefore, when we say man *lives*, we ought to mean, he uses

[1] In *Conv.*, iv. 8, Dante gives the diameter of the earth as 6500 miles.
[2] See note to *Conv.*, ii. 1, par. 5, on *Form.*

his reason, which is his special life, and the act of his noblest part.[1] Whence he who gives up the use of his reason, and lives only the life of the senses, lives not as a man, but as a beast; as that most excellent Boëthius has said, "He lives an ass." Correctly, I say, because thought is the proper act of reason, wherefore the beasts do not think, because they have it not; and I do not say this, indeed, of the lower animals, but of those in human shape, with the spirit of a sheep or any other abominable beast.[2]

3. I say, then, that the life of my heart, that is, my inner life, had ever been one sweet thought (*sweet* in the sense of *persuasive*, that is, charming, gentle, pleasing, delightful), and that this thought soared often to the feet of the Sire of them to whom I speak (that is, God); which is to say, that I, in my thoughts, meditated upon the kingdom of the blest. And I immediately tell the final cause why my thought ascended there, when I say, "*Where it beheld a Lady worshipping*, in order to make it understood that I was, and am, certain by her gracious revelation that she is in heaven; wherefore I, thinking often could this be possible for me, went thither, rapt,[3] as it were.

4. Then afterwards I relate the effect of this

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[1] See *Conv.*, iii. 2; and iv. 7, par. 6.

[2] Another instance of Dante's contempt for sheep.

[3] "There it appeared to me that in a vision
Ecstatic, on a sudden I was rapt."
(*Purg.*, 15. 85.)

"For some time given to Wisdom and to the contemplation of the universe, I had enjoyed the beatitude of the mind; as if rapt by the divine spirit in sublime flight, I traversed with my soul the pathway of the moon, the sun, and the other celestial orbs. And now I soar again, as upon the wings of Wisdom, who without ceasing calls to me from the place where she abides" (Philo, *De Legib. Special.*, lib. 2, proem).

thought, describing its sweetness to be such that it made me desirous of death, that I might go where she was, and this I say thus, "*And of her brought to me such tidings sweet, That all my soul cried out, 'I, too, would go!'*" And this is the origin of one of the conflicting thoughts within me. And be it known that *thought* is put here, and not *soul*, for that which ascends to gaze upon that Blessed One, because it was a special thought for that action; *soul* being understood (as is said in the preceding chapter) to be thought in general and with consent.

5. Then when I say, "*Then came a thought that put the first to flight*," I relate the origin of the other conflicting thought, saying that, whereas the above-named thought [of Beatrice] was wont to be my life, so now another appears, that puts the first to flight. I say *to flight*, to show its conflicting nature, for naturally the adverse one would fly from the other; and the one which flies, shows that it flies from lack of force. And I say that this thought, which so lately came to me, has much power over me, and conquers my whole soul, saying that it hath such lordly power that my *heart* (that is, my inner man) trembles, and my outward man shows it by taking on a new semblance.[1]

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[1] *Vita Nuova*, § 2, "The spirit of life, which dwelleth in the most secret chamber of the heart, began to tremble so violently, that the lightest pulses of my body shook with it." And § 4, "My soul became so absorbed in the thought of this most noble one, that I became in a short time so frail and weak that upon many of my friends the sight weighed heavily." And in §§ 14 and 15 he speaks of "the battle of contending thoughts," that leaves him with so changed a countenance.

"Looks, which the heart's witnesses are wont to be."
(*Purg.*, 28. 44.)

6. Afterwards I show the power of this new thought by its effect, saying that it makes me to behold a lady, and speaks alluring words to me, that is, converses with the eyes of my mind, the better to persuade me, promising me that in her eyes is salvation.[1] And the better to convince the experienced soul of this, it says that the eyes of this lady cannot be beheld by any who fear the anguish of deep sighs. And it is a fine rhetorical device to appear outwardly to disparage a thing, and really in a deeper sense to commend it. More powerful inducement to my mind to yield could not have been found by this new thought of love, than this speaking so profoundly of the power of her [the new lady's] eyes.

CHAPTER IX.

1. NOW that it is shown how and why love was born, and the opposing idea with which I struggled, it is proper to proceed to explain the meaning of that part [of the canzone] in which different thoughts contend within me. I say that it was best first to describe the side of the *soul*, that is, of the former

[1] "Salute," in Italian, may mean *salvation*, *health*, *safety*, or *salutation*, and both in the *Vita Nuova* and the *Convito* Dante continually avails himself of its multifold significance (see note to v. 2 of Canzone II.). In the *Vita Nuova*, after having spoken of "her salutation" several times, he defines it in § 19 as "the operation of her mouth," that is, her *smile*. In *Conv.*, ii. 16, par. 2, he says of "the eyes of Philosophy," "Verily in you is salvation, making blessed whoso looks upon you." And in *Conv.*, iii. 15, he says, "The eyes of Wisdom are her demonstrations, and her smile is her persuasions; and in these two are felt that most lofty pleasure of beatitude which is the highest good of Paradise."

thought, and afterwards the other, for this reason: that what the speaker wishes particularly to say, he should always reserve till the last;[1] because that which is said last always remains longest in the mind of the hearer. Therefore, because I intend to relate and to discuss that which is *done* by the influence of those to whom I speak,[2] rather than that which they *undo*, it were reasonable first to relate and discuss the condition of the side which is being destroyed, and then that of the other which is being generated.

2. However, a doubt comes in here, which must not be passed over without explanation. Some might say, as love is the effect of these Intelligences (to whom I speak), and as the effect of the first [thought] was love, as well as that of the second, why should their power destroy the one and generate the other? —whereas it ought rather to preserve the first love, for the reason that every cause loves its effect, and loving this [effect], it ought to preserve that other [love].

3. To this question it may be easily answered, that their effect is love, as has been said;[3] and because they can only maintain it in those subjects under their influence, they transfer it from that which is beyond their power, to that which is within it; that is, from the soul departed from this life to that one which is still in it; as human nature preserves the

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[1] "Like one who speaks,
And keeps his warmest utterance for the last."
(*Purg.*, 30. 72.)

[2] The Intelligences that guide the third heaven.

[3] See *Conv.*, ii. 6, par. 5; and ch. 7, par. 6.

human form by transmission from father to son,[1] because her effect could not be perpetually preserved in the father. I say *effect*, in so far as the soul in conjunction with the body can be called the effect of this [human nature]; because, having left it, it endures for ever in a nature more than human;[2] and thus is solved the question.

4. But as the immortality of the soul is here touched upon, I will make a digression in order to discuss it, because while doing so it will be well to finish here what I have to say about that blessed living[3] Beatrice, of whom I do not intend to speak further in this book. By way of preface I say, that of all idiocies, that is the most stupid, most vile, and most damnable which holds that after this life there is none other; because, if we look through all the writings of the philosophers, as well as of the other wise authors, they all agree in this, that there is some part of us which is immortal. And this above all seems to be the opinion of Aristotle in his *Of the Soul;* this Tullius seems to think, especially in his book on *Old Age;* this seems to be thought by all poets who have

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[1] "A generated nature its own way
Would always make like its progenitors,
If Providence Divine were not triumphant."
(*Par.*, 8. 133.)

[2] This is Giuliani's reading. Fraticelli gives it, "I say *effect* in so far as the soul and body are united; and not effect as to the perpetual duration of the former, being separate [from the body] in a nature more than human."

[3] *Viva*, "living," in the sense of a mortal being, as used always in the *Inferno*. In the *Vita Nuova*, § 17, Dante says that, having told his lady almost the whole of his condition, "it seemed to me that I should be silent, having said enough concerning myself. But albeit I spake not to her again, yet it behoved me afterward to write of another matter more noble than the foregoing."

spoken according to the faith of the Gentiles;[1] and this seems to be the meaning of all law, whether of Jews, Saracens, or Tartars,[2] or any others who live at all according to law. For that all deceived themselves, were an impossibility, horrible even to mention. Every one is certain that human nature is the most perfect of all natures here below,[3] and this is denied by none; and Aristotle asserts it, when he says, in the twelfth *Of the Animals*, that man is the most perfect of all animals.[4] Therefore, whereas many living beings are entirely mortal, like the brutes, and are without this hope while they live (that is, of another life), if our hope were vain[5] we should be worse off than any other animal. Whereas many have already existed who have given this life for the other;[6] and therefore it would follow that the most perfect animal, that is, man, were most imperfect (which is impossible), and that that part of him wherein lies his greatest perfection, that is, reason, would be to him the cause of his greatest defect; which would seem a wholly strange thing to say. And, moreover, it would follow that nature, acting

[1] The heathen.

[2] Aroux and others think that Dante referred here to the *Tartarini*, one of the heretic sects otherwise known as *Patarini*, or *Catharists*, all resembling the Albigenses in creed.

[3] See *Conv.*, iii. 8, par. 1.

[4] "That nature
Made for the *animals* she holds most dear."

Scartazzini defines *animals* here (*Purg*., 29. 137) as "beings endowed with *anima*" (soul). In the *Inf*., 5. 88, Francesca addresses Dante, "O *animal* most gracious and benignant!" but, of course, Aristotle uses the word in the usual sense.

[5] "And not the less these people pray for this;
Must then their hope be all in vain?"

[6] "Therefore is this principle most true, which, if contradicted, would be followed by so many absurdities" (*De Monarchia*, iii. 2).

against herself, had set this hope within the human mind; since it is said that many have hastened the death of the body in order to enter the other life; and that also were impossible.[1]

5. Again, we have a continual experience of our immortality in the divinations of our dreams;[2] which could not be, if in us there were no immortal part; because the revealer must be immortal, whether corporeal or incorporeal, if we think of it subtly. And I say corporeal or incorporeal on account of the different opinions I find on this point; and that which is inspired or informed by an immediate agent, should be in proportion to its agent; and between the mortal and the immortal there is no proportion.

6. Again, it is confirmed by the most veracious teaching of Christ, which is the Way, the Truth, and the Light: the Way, because by it we enter without hindrance upon the felicity of this immortality; the Truth, because it suffers no error;[3] the Light, because it shines for us in the darkness of mundane ignorance. This teaching, I say, gives us more certainty than all other reasons; because given us by Him who sees and measures our immortality, which we cannot see perfectly while our immortality is mixed with mortality; but we see it perfectly by faith;[4] and by

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[1] That is, that nature could be capable of such a mistake.

[2] "And when this mind of ours, a wanderer
More from the flesh, and less by care imprisoned,
Almost prophetic in its visions is."
(*Purg.*, 9. 114.)

[3] "That Faith which o'ercometh every error."
(*Inf.*, 4. 48.)

[4] "There will be seen what we receive by faith,
Not demonstrated, but self-evident."
(*Par.*, 2. 43.)

reason we see it with a shadow of obscurity, which comes of the mixture of the mortal with the immortal. And this should be the most potent of arguments that in us both exist; and thus I believe, assert, and am certain,[1] that after this I shall pass to another better life, where that glorious lady lives, of whom my soul was enamoured, while engaged in the struggle which is described in the following chapter.

CHAPTER X.

1. TO return to the subject, I say that in the verse that commences, "*And so opposed this thought that it destroyed*," I intend to set forth what my soul discoursed of within me, that is, the old thought against the new. And first I indicate briefly the cause of her sorrowful speaking when I say, "*And so opposed this thought that it destroyed That gentle thought was wont to speak to me Of a dear angel that is crowned in heaven.*" The latter is that special[2] thought spoken of above, that hath ever been the life of this sad heart.[3]

2. Then when I say, "*And my soul wept, so great once more her grief*," I show my soul still in the same mood, and speaking sadly; and I say that she spoke with lamentation, almost as if she wondered at this

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[1] "These things profound . . .
. . . exist there only in belief,
Upon the which is founded the high hope,
And hence it takes the nature of a substance."
(*Par.*, 24. 70–75.)

[2] Some texts read *spiritual* instead of *special*.

[3] See ch. 8, par. 3.

sudden transformation, saying, "*Ah, woe is me! how swift hath fled That pitying thought that came to comfort me!*" She might well say *to comfort*, because in her great bereavement this thought, which ascended to heaven, had given her great consolation.

3. Then afterwards I say that my whole thought, that is, my soul, whom I call "*this sorrowing one*," reverts to excuses of herself, and speaks against my eyes; and this is seen here: "*And to mine eyes this sorrowing one did say.*" And I say that she says of them and against them three things; the first is, that she curses the hour that they met this lady's gaze. And here let it be known, that though many things may be impressed upon the eye at once, nevertheless the one which strikes directly upon the centre of the pupil, that one is really seen, and alone impressed upon the imagination. And this is because the nerve by which the spirit of vision is transmitted is directed to that point;[1] and therefore it is certain that one eye cannot look at another without being seen by it; because as the eye which looks receives the form [of the other] in its pupil by a direct line, so by the same line its form goes to the one it looks at; and many times by the direction of this line are shot the arrows of him to whom all weapons are light.[2] Therefore, when I say that "*ye met this Lady's gaze*," it is as much as to say that her eyes and mine met.

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[1] In *Inf.*, 9, 73, Virgil uncovers Dante's eyes, and says—

"Direct the nerve
Of vision now along that ancient foam."

[2] In *Purg.*, 31. 116, Dante speaks of the eyes of Beatrice as

"The emeralds,
Whence Love aforetime drew for thee his weapons."

4. The second thing she says is when she reproves their disobedience, saying, "*Why put not faith in what I said of her?*"

5. Then she proceeds to the third thing, and says that she ought not to reproach herself for lack of foresight, but them [her eyes] for their disobedience; wherefore she says that whenever she spoke of this lady she said, her eyes must have power over me, if she should once open the way for it; and this she says here, "*I said to ye, Well in those eyes of hers,*" etc. And it may be well believed that my soul knew that her disposition was adapted to receive the influence of that lady, and therefore she feared it; because the influence of the agent takes effect upon the passive nature disposed to receive it, as the philosopher says in the second *Of the Soul.* And therefore, if wax could have the sentiment of fear, it would be more afraid to come under the rays of the sun than stone would; because its nature makes it susceptible of a more powerful impression therefrom.

6. Finally, the soul shows in her speech that their presumption had been perilous to them, when she says, "*Nor did it profit me to know and fear To look on that dread Power that caused my death.*" *To fear to look on* him, she says, who she had before said, "*killeth such as I;*" and so end her words, to which the new thought replies, as is related in the following chapter.

Chapter XI.

1. The meaning has now been explained of the side which the soul takes, that is, the old thought which was being destroyed. It should be followed now by the explanation of the side taken by the new and adverse thought. And this is all contained in the verse which begins, "*Thou art not dead.*" Which part, to be well understood, should be divided in two; because in the first part, which begins, "*Thou art not dead,*" the thought says (to go on with its final words), It is not true that thou art dead; but the cause that thou seemest to thyself to be so, is the dismay[1] into which thou hast basely fallen at the apparition of this lady. And here it should be observed that as Boëthius says in his *Consolations*, "No sudden change in things can take place without some disturbance of the soul."[2] And this is the meaning of the reproof given by this thought, which is called *a spirit of love*, that it may be understood that my consent inclines towards him; and this may be still better comprehended, and his victory recognized, by his speaking already of *our soul*, as implying intimacy with it.

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[1] "Sight is in thee bewildered and not dead."
(*Par.*, 26. 9.)

[2] "As appears
Suddenly something that doth turn aside
Through very wonder, every other thought."
(*Purg.*, 28. 37.)

"Omnis subita mutatio rerum non sine quodam quasi fluctu contingit animorum" (*De Cons. Phil.*, ii. pr. 1). And Petrarch, in his *Sonnet* (i. 117), says—

"Full of an urgent thought that turned aside
My mind from all the rest."

2. Then, as has been said, he tells this reprimanded soul what she ought to do, to come to this lady, and so says to her, "*But look how pitiful and meek she is.*" These two things are the proper remedies for that terror with which the soul seems possessed ; and which when conjoined should give a person good hope, and especially pity,[1] which makes all other goodness resplendent by its light. Wherefore Virgil, speaking of Æneas, as his highest praise calls him pitiful [pious]: and pity is not what the common people think it, that is, to lament over the woes of others; on the contrary, this is one of its special effects, which is called sympathy, and is a passion. But pity is not a passion, but rather a noble disposition of the soul, made ready to receive love, mercy, and other loving passions.

3. Then this [new thought] says, "*And in her greatness courteous and most wise.*" Here it speaks of three things, which out of those we can acquire, more especially make a person attractive. It says *wise.* Now, what is more lovely in woman than

[1] *Pietà* is constantly used by Dante in its two senses of "pity" and "piety." Of this we have an example in *Par.*, 4. 105, "Not to lose piety pitiless became," where Scartazzini interprets it as "filial piety," in that Alcmæon killed his mother rather than disobey his father. "The son avenging one parent by the death of the other parent will be pious and wicked in the same action" (*Ultrusque parente parentem Natus erit facto pius et sceleratus eodem.*—Ovid, *Met.*, ix. 407). St. Thomas Aquinas says, "Pietas principaliter est ad parentes et ad patriam, in quibus includuntur omnes consanguinei, cives, et amici, et patria" (*Summa Theol.*, p. ii. qu. 80). In *Inf.*, 20. 28, we have a similar play on words: "Here pity lives when it is wholly dead," that is, piety here consists in having no pity—in acquiescing in the Divine judgments. In *Conv.*, iv. 21, Dante puts "pity" with "the fear of the Lord" as one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. He goes on to explain that he means rather the state of mind that induces compassion, than the emotion itself.

knowledge? It says *courteous;* and nothing is more becoming to woman than courtesy. And let not the miserable vulgar make another mistake in the meaning of this word, believing it to be the same thing as liberality;[1] for liberality is a special and not general courtesy. Courtesy and virtue are one;[2] and because, of old, virtue and fine manners were the custom of courts (whereas to-day the contrary is true), this word was derived from *court;* and courtesy was none other than the custom of the *court.* If we should wish to-day to take such a word from the courts, especially of Italy, there would be nothing we could use except baseness.

4. It says, "*In her greatness.*" Temporal greatness, which is meant here, is especially well accompanied by the two aforesaid good qualities, because it is the light that shows most clearly the virtue or vice of a person.[3] And how much of wisdom and of virtuous living we see by this light to be wanting! and how much folly and how much vice are discerned by it! It were better for all wretches, great fools, dunces, and vicious persons to be of low estate, so that neither in the world nor after death should they

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[1] The word in the original is *larghezza*, also used in *Par.*, 5. 19, in the same sense—

"The greatest gift that in his largess God
Creating made."

[2] "In the land laved by Po and Adige,
Valour and courtesy used to be found."

Boccaccio defines *courtesy* as consisting in those actions that make social life agreeable and render due honour to all men; *valour* as relating more to the duties of the citizen and the soldier as regarded the honour of the republic.

[3] "In that fierce light which beats upon a throne."
(Tennyson.)

be so infamous. Truly of them did Solomon say in Ecclesiastes,[1] "There is another and worst evil which I have seen under the sun; that is, riches kept to the hurt of their lord."

5. Then it afterwards commands her, that is, my soul, that she should now take this one for her sovereign lady; promising her that she shall therewith be content, when she shall behold all her loveliness; and this it says here, "*Because, if thou wilt to thyself be true, Such miracles of beauty thou shalt see.*" Nor says anything different up to the end of this verse. And here ends the literal meaning of all that I say in this canzone, speaking to the celestial Intelligences.

CHAPTER XII.

1. FINALLY, according to what the letter of this commentary has said above (when I divided this canzone into its principal parts), I turn the face of my discourse to the canzone itself, and speak to that.[2] And in order that this [final] part may be more fully understood, I say that in all canzoni it is generally called the *Return*[3] [*Tornata*], because the poets [or reciters] who used it in the first place, made it so that the canzone being sung, with a certain portion of the song they could *return* to it. But I seldom wrote it with this intention; and that others may observe this, have seldom conformed it as much as is

[1] Eccles. v. 13.

[2] See ch. 2 for this division.

[3] The *Tornata* corresponds to the French *L'Envoy*, and is generally in the form of an address to the canzone itself.

necessary in rhythm and in notes to the order of the canzone; but I have employed it when anything necessary to the embellishment of the canzone was to be said, independent of its [general] meaning; as will be seen in this one, and in the others. And therefore I say now, that the worth and beauty of every discourse are separate and diverse; that their worth is in the meaning, and their beauty in the ornament of the words; and both are delightful; although their worth is very much more delightful. Wherefore, since it would be difficult to appreciate the *worth* of this canzone, on account of the different persons who speak in it (which necessitates careful distinction), and the *beauty* is easily perceived, it seemed to me necessary to warn the canzone that others would think more about its beauty than about its worth. And this is what I say in this part.

2. But because it often happens that in certain conditions an admonition appears indiscreet, the rhetorician is accustomed to speak indirectly to others, directing his words, not to him for whom they are meant, but to another.[1] And this is the method actually observed here; for the words are addressed to the canzone, but the meaning to mankind. I say, then, I believe, canzone, that they will be rare, that is *few*, who will understand thee well. And I tell the reason, which is double. First, because thy speech is dark (I say *dark*, for the reason already given[2]), and difficult, because of the strangeness of the meaning. Then I admonish it, and say, If by chance

[1] *Conv.*, iii. 10, par. 3.

[2] That there are several speakers in the poem, who must be carefully distinguished.

thou shouldest go where such persons are as appear to be doubtful of thy meaning,[1] do not be dismayed, but say to them, Since ye cannot perceive my worth, at least behold my beauty. By which I mean nothing, as I have already said, except this: Oh! men, who cannot see the meaning of this canzone, at least reject it not; but consider its beauty, which is great, as well in its construction, which concerns the grammarians, as in the order of its speech, which concerns the rhetoricians, and in the rhythm of its parts, which concerns the musicians. Which things can be easily seen in it, by those who look out for them. And this is the whole of the literal meaning of the first canzone which is set before us as being the first course[2] [of our banquet].

CHAPTER XIII.

1. SINCE the literal meaning has been sufficiently explained, we have now to proceed to the *allegorical* and *true* explanation.[3] And therefore, to go back again to the beginning, I say that when I had lost the first delight of my soul (of which mention has been made above), I remained so absorbed in sorrow

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[1] "And such doubt cannot be solved by those who are not in a similar degree the faithful of love; and to those who are, that which would explain the doubtful words is plain; and therefore it would not be well for me to explain this dubious passage, seeing that my words would be in vain, or rather superfluous" (*Vita Nuova*, § 14).

[2] See *Conv.*, i. 1, par. 6.

[3] Many of the commentators think that the part of this canzone which concerns Dante's first love has only a literal meaning, and that the second part alone is both literal and allegorical.

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that no comfort availed me. However, after some time, my mind, which was struggling to regain its health, saw that it was necessary (as neither mine own nor others' consolation was of any avail) to try the plan which another disconsolate one had adopted to console himself. And I set myself to read that book of Boëthius,[1] not known to many, wherewith, a prisoner and banished, he had comforted himself And again, hearing that Tullius[2] had written another book, in which, treating of *Friendship*, he had spoken consoling words to Lælius, a most excellent man, on the death of his friend Scipio, I set myself to read that. And although at first it was hard for me to understand their meaning, I finally made out as much as what art of grammar[3] I possessed, together with some little intellectual power of my own, enabled me to do; by which intellectual power I had already beheld many things, as it were dreaming,[4] as may be seen in the *Vita Nuova*.

2. And just as if a man should go about looking for silver, and apart from his purpose should find gold (which some occult cause presented, perhaps not without Divine ordinance); so I, who sought to console myself, found not only a remedy for my tears, but sayings of authors and of sciences, and of books; considering which, I soon decided that Philosophy, who was the sovereign lady of these authors, these sciences, and these books, was the

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[1] *De Consolatione Philosophia.* [2] *De Amicitia.*

[3] See note on *Grammar*, ch. 1 of this book, par. 4.

[4] See §§ 3, 9, 12, 23, 24, and 43 of the *Vita Nuova* for these vision This "intellectual power" of which Dante speaks, seems to me to mean rather that power of spiritual intuition (the *Gnosis* of the ancients) to which he refers in ch. 5 of this book, par. 5.

supreme thing. And I imagined her as a noble lady; and I could not imagine her as other than merciful; wherefore so willingly did my thought dwell upon her that it could scarcely be diverted from her. And on account of this imagination I began to go where she in truth showed herself, that is, in the schools of the religious and the disputations of the philosophers; so that in a little while, perhaps thirty months, I began to be so deeply aware of her sweetness, that the love of her banished and destroyed every other thought. Wherefore feeling myself raised above the thought of the first love to the virtue of this one, almost as if wondering at myself, I opened my mouth in the words of the said canzone, setting forth my condition under the figure of other things; because no rhyme in any vulgar tongue were worthy to speak openly of the lady whom I loved, nor were the hearers sufficiently prepared to have readily understood the literal words; nor would they have put faith in the true meaning as in the fictitious,[1] because they were more ready to believe that I was disposed to that love than to this one. I began, therefore, by saying, "*Ye who, intelligent, the third heaven guide.*"

3. And because, as has been said, this lady was the daughter of God, the Queen of all, the most noble and most beautiful Philosophy, it remains to be seen who were these motive Powers, and what this third heaven. And first of this third heaven, according to the order followed. And here it is not

[1] The *fictitious* standing here for the *literal* meaning, as opposed to the *allegorical*, which Dante has declared to be the *true* significance.

necessary to go on dividing and explaining the letter; because, having turned the allegorical words from their sound to their sense by the foregoing exposition, their meaning is sufficiently explained.

Chapter XIV.

1. To see what is meant by the third heaven, we must first see what I mean by the single word "heaven;" and then we shall see how and why this third heaven was necessary to us. I say that by *heaven* I mean science, and by *heavens* the sciences, because of three resemblances which the heavens bear to the sciences, above all in order and number, which seem to correspond in them; as will be seen in treating of this word "third."

2. The first resemblance is the revolution of each around its immovable [centre]. Because each movable heaven revolves around its centre, which, however forcible that motion may be, remains immovable;[1]

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[1] Perez, in his *Beatrice Svelata*, gives a table of the allegorical heavens, taken from the *De Anima* of Aristotle, with the commentary of Averrhoës, vol. vii., ed. *Commiana* of 1560. There are here but eight spheres, and the Sun and Mars are transposed. They stand thus:—

1. Luna.	Sensus particolaris.
2. Mercurius.	Sensus comunis.
3. Veneris.	Imaginativa.
4. Solis.	Estimativa.
5. Martis.	Memorativa.
6. Iovis.	Appetitiva.
7. Saturni.	Irascitiva.
8.	*Intellectiva animæ pars*,

and which contains also the "*Substantiarum separatum intellectio.*"

and so each science revolves around its subject, which is not moved by it, because no science demonstrates its own subject, but presupposes it.

3. The second resemblance is in their power of illumination. For as each heaven illuminates visible things, so each science illuminates those that are intelligible.

4. And the third resemblance is in their [the heavens'] conducting towards perfection of things disposed thereto. Of which influence, in so far as it concerns the primal perfection,[1] that is, material generation, all philosophers are agreed that the heavens are the cause, although they state it in different ways; some that it comes from the motive Powers, like Plato, Avicenna,[2] and Algazel;[3] some,

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To the eight spheres here given, Christian scholasticism (and Dante with it) added the ninth, or *Primum Mobile*, and the tenth, or *Empyrean*, while they transposed the heavens of the Sun and Mars. The fact that the intelligence (*intellectiva animæ pars*) is located in the eighth heaven shows why Beatrice here vouchsafes to Dante her brightest smile and here alone he becomes capable of enduring its splendour; why the most important visions appear to him here, so that here he beholds

> "All the fruit
> Harvested by the rolling of these spheres;"

and why, finally, in this heaven, he is consecrated as a soldier of the intelligence for the benefit of human unity.

> "That motion which keeps quiet
> The centre, and all the rest about it moves."
> (*Par.*, 27. 106.)

[1] For the two kinds of human perfection, see *Conv.*, i. 13, par. 2.

[2] Avicenna is put by Dante among the great spirits of the Pagan Limbo (*Inf.*, 4). He was an Arabian physician of Ispahan, 980–1036.

[3] Al-gazali, a Moslem theologian, 1058–1111. His philosophy was characterized by a reversion from the metaphysical to the theological stage of thought. He wrote a treatise, called *The Destruction of the Philosophies*, against the accepted Aristotleism of the day, and spent his last years absorbed in the contemplative life of the Sufis.

from the stars (especially in the case of human souls[1]), like Socrates, and also Plato, and Dionysius the Academician; and some from the celestial virtue[2] which is in the natural heat of the seed, like Aristotle and the other Peripatetics.

5. And thus the sciences are the causes that bring about our second perfection; for through their means we can speculate on truth, which is our ultimate perfection, as the Philosopher has said in the sixth of the *Ethics*,[3] when he says that the true is the good of the intellect.[4] For these, as well as for many other resemblances, we may call science *heaven.*

6. Now we must see why we say *third* heaven. Here we must reflect upon a comparison between the order of the heavens and that of the sciences. For, as has been said above, the seven heavens nearest to us are those of the planets; then there are two heavens above these, movable, and one over all the rest, motionless. To the first seven correspond the seven sciences of the *Trivium* and *Quadrivium*, that

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[1] "He says the soul unto its star returns,
Believing it to have been severed thence
Whenever nature gave it as a form."
(*Par.*, 4. 53.)

"Forma hominis est anima rationalis" (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.*, p. ii. qu. 164, art. 1). And *Conv.*, iv. 21, par. 2—

"Ye who are living every cause refer
Still to the heavens above."
(*Purg.*, 16. 67.)

[2] "The active virtue, being made a soul," etc.
(*Purg.*, 25. 52.)

[3] "Truth is the work of both the intellectual parts of the soul," *i.e.* reason and desire (Aristotle, *Ethics*, vi. 2).

"The people dolorous
Who have foregone the good of intellect."
(*Inf.*, 3. 18.)

[4] See *Conv.*, ii. 15, par. 6.

is, *Grammar,* Dialectics, Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, and Astrology.[1] To the eighth sphere, that is, to the Starry Heaven, correspond Natural Science, called *Physics,* and the first of sciences called *Metaphysics* ;[2] to the ninth sphere corresponds Moral Science ; and to the Quiet Heaven corresponds Divine Science, which is called Theology. And the reason of all this may be briefly seen.

7. I say that the Heaven of the Moon resembles Grammar, because it may be compared with it. For if we look closely at the moon, we see two things peculiar to it which we cannot see in the other stars ;[3] one is the shadow[4] in it, which is no other than the rarity of its body,[5] in which the rays of the sun cannot terminate and be reflected as in the other parts ;[6] the other is the variation in its brightness, which now shines from one side and now from the other, according

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[1] Or Astronomy, synonymous words with Dante.

"Through *seven doors* I entered with these sages."
(*Inf.*, 4. 110.)

[2] *Conv.*, i. 1, par. 1.

[3] *Stars* in the general sense, as the moon is called "the first star" in *Par.*, 2. 30.

[4] "Under Seville
Touches the ocean-wave, Cain and the thorns."
(*Inf.*, 20, 125.)

(The shadow in the moon, popularly so called in Dante's time. See the *thorn-bush* of "Moonshine" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*)

[5] Beatrice confutes this opinion of Dante's in *Par.*, 2. 64, *et seq.*, and Dante himself retracts it in *Par.*, 22. 139—.

"I saw the daughter of Latona shining
Without that shadow, which to me was cause
That once I had believed her rare and dense."

This correction of Dante's is one of the proofs that this part at least of the *Convito* was written before the *Paradiso.*

[6] "Into itself did the eternal pearl
Receive us, even as water doth receive
A ray of light, remaining still unbroken."
(*Par.*, 2. 34.)

as the sun looks upon it. And these two properties has Grammar; because, by reason of its infinity, the rays of reason do not terminate in some parts, especially of the words; and they shine, now here, now there, in so far as certain words, certain declensions, certain constructions, are [now] in use that formerly were not, and many were once that shall be again, as Horace says in the beginning of his *Poetry*, where he says, "Many words shall be born again that have fallen out of use."[1]

8. And the Heaven of Mercury may be compared to Dialectics by reason of two of its properties: because Mercury is the smallest star of heaven,[2] its diameter not being more than two hundred and thirty-two miles, according to Alfergano,[3] who says that it is one twenty-eighth of the earth's diameter, which is six thousand five hundred miles. The other property is, that it is more veiled by the rays of the sun than is any other star.[4] And these two properties we find in Dialectics; for Dialectics is of a smaller body than any other science, being entirely contained and completed in the amount of text found in the old art

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[1] *De Arte Poet.*, 70, "Multa renascentur quæ jam cecidere, cadentque Quæ nunc sunt in onore vocabula."

[2] "This little planet doth adorn itself
With the good spirits that have active been,
That fame and honour might come after them."
(*Par.*, 6. 112.)

[3] Ahmed-ben Kotsaïr, an Arabian astronomer called Alfergano, from the city of Ferganah, in Sogdiana, where he was born. He lived about the middle of the ninth (? tenth) century, and wrote in Arabic a book on *Chronological and Astronomical Elements*, translated into Latin in 1142.

[4] "The sphere
Veiled for us mortals in another's rays."
(*Par.*, 5. 129.)

and the new ;[1] and is more veiled than any other science, inasmuch as it proceeds by more sophistical and probable arguments than any other.

9. And the Heaven of Venus[2] may be compared to Rhetoric on account of two of its properties : one is the brightness of its aspect,[3] which is most charming to look upon, more than any other star ; the other is its appearance, now in the morning, now in the evening.[4] And these two properties hath Rhetoric ; for Rhetoric is the most charming of all the sciences,[5] this being its principal intention [*i.e.* to charm or persuade]. It appears in the morning, when the Rhetorician speaks before the face of his hearer ; it appears in the evening, that is; in retreat, when Literature, from a distance, speaks for the Rhetorician.[6]

10. And the Heaven of the Sun may be compared to Arithmetic for two of its properties : one is, that with its light all the other stars are informed[7] ; the other is, that the eye cannot look upon it. And these two properties are in Arithmetic, which illuminates all the

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[1] Probably the title of some old treatise on Dialectics (Pederzini).

[2] "That fairest star that moveth us to love."
(*Purg.*, I. 19.)

"Cytherea beamed,
Who with the fire of love seems always burning."
(*Purg.*, 27. 95.)

[4] See Appendix I. to ch. 2 of this book, on the "Epicycle of Venus."

[5] *Conv.*, ii. 7, par. 4.

[6] Rhetoric *spoken* is said to be like the morning star, *before* the listener, being in his presence ; and *behind* him, like the evening star, when the words of an author are read, at a distance from him.

[7] "He who all the world illuminates."
(*Par.*, 20. 1.)

sciences by its light ;[1] because all their subjects are considered under some number, and in considering them we always proceed by number. As in Natural Science, the subject is the movable body, which movable body has in it ratio of continuity, and this has in it ratio of infinite number. And the chiefest consideration in Natural Science is to consider the principles of natural things, which are three : matter, privation,[2] and form ; in which we perceive Number ; not only in all taken together, but also in each one, to whom considereth subtly. Wherefore Pythagoras (according to what Aristotle says in his first [book] on *Physics*[3]) puts *odd* and *even* as the principles of natural things, considering all things as number. The other property of the Sun we also see in Number (of which Arithmetic is the science), for the eye of the intellect cannot look upon it ; because Number, considered in itself, is infinite, and this we cannot comprehend.[4]

11. And the Heaven of Mars may be compared

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[1] "A sun that one and all of them enkindled,
Even as our own doth the supernal sights."
("*The other Stars*," *Par.*, 23. 30.)

[2] *Privation* is defined by Aristotle as potential possession in one sense of the word (see *Met.*, bk. iv., ch. 22).

[3] Giuliani says that this should read *Metaphysics*, as it is in the fifth chapter of that book that Aristotle quotes this theory of Pythagoras.

[4] "Thou thinkest that to me thy thought doth pass
From Him who is the first, as from the unit,
If that be known, ray out the five and six."
(*Par.*, 15. 55.)

"Here the poet declares that from the perfect cognition of absolute unity we gain the knowledge of things, as from the clear idea of mathematical unity proceeds the intellectual vision of all number, indicated by the determination of the five and the six. This most simple conception is the foundation of the science of numbers" (Erdmann, *Gesch. der Philos.*).

to Music for two properties: one is, its most beautiful relation [to the other heavens]; for in counting up the movable heavens, whether we begin at the lowest or the highest, this Heaven of Mars is the fifth; it is the centre of all, that is, of the first, the second, the third, and the fourth. The other is, that this Mars dries and burns things, because its heat is like that of fire; and this is why it seems to be of a fiery colour,[1] sometimes more and sometimes less, according to the destiny and rarity of the vapours which follow it,[2] and which often take fire of themselves, as is laid down in the first book of *Meteors*. (And therefore Albumassar[3] says that the kindling of these vapours signifies the death of kings and the change of kingdoms, because these are the effects of the ascendency of Mars. And Seneca says therefore that, on the death of the Emperor Augustus, there was seen on high a ball of fire. And in Florence, at the beginning of its downfall, there was seen in the air, in the figure of a cross,[4] a great

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[1] "Through the gross vapours Mars grows fiery red."
(*Purg.*, 2. 14.)
"The star
That seemed to me more ruddy than its wont."
(*Par.*, 14. 85.)

[2] "Mars draws a vapour up from Val di Magra,
Which is with turbid clouds enveloped round."
(*Inf.*, 24. 145.)

[3] An Arabian astronomer, born at Balka, in Turkestan, A.D. 805; died 885. He wrote an *Introduction to Astronomy*, and has been thought to be the author of the book on *Meteors* of which Dante speaks; but it was more likely Albertus Magnus on *Meteors* whom the poet quotes in *Conv.*, ii. 23.

[4] Giuliani and others think that Dante refers here to a red cross said to have been seen in the sky, above the Palazzo dei Priori, on the evening of the entrance of Charles of Valois into Florence, November 4, 1301.

quantity of these vapours, followers of the star of Mars.) And these two properties are in Music, wherein everything is relative, as we see in harmonized words and in songs; for the more beautiful their relation [to each other], the sweeter the harmony that results therefrom, which is especially beautiful in this science, because this is its special purpose. Again, Music draws to itself the human spirits,[1] which are principally vapours of the heart, as it were, so that they almost cease to act; so entirely is the soul one thing when it listens,[2] and the power of all [the rest of the senses] seems to fly to that sensible spirit which receives sound.

12. And the Heaven of Jupiter may be compared to Geometry for two properties: one is, that it moves between two heavens opposed to its good temperateness, that of Mars and that of Saturn. Wherefore Ptolemy says, in the book before quoted,[3] that Jupiter is a star of temperate complexion,[4] midway between the coldness of Saturn[5] and the heat of Mars. The other is, that among all the stars it

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[1] That is, the senses. In the *Vita Nuova* Dante speaks often of "the spirits of the eyes," etc.

[2] "Whenever by delight or else by pain,
That any faculty of ours attacks,
The soul therein doth quite absorb itself,
It seemeth that no other power it heeds."
(*Purg.*, 4. 1.)

[3] In *Conv.*, ii. 3.

[4] "Thence there appeared the temperateness of Jove."
(*Par.*, 22. 145.)

[5] In the beginning of *Purg.*, 19, Dante refers to the coldness of Saturn. His master, Brunetto Latini, calls it "cruel, malignant, and cold of nature." And Virgil, in the *Georgics*, 1. 335, speaks of "*frigida* Saturni."

shows white, almost as if silvered.[1] And these things are in the science of Geometry. Geometry moves between two opposing things, as the point and the circle (and I call a circle, speaking generally, everything round, whether in body or surface); because, as Euclid says, the point is the beginning of Geometry, and, according to him, the circle is its most perfect figure, and may therefore be considered its end. So that Geometry moves between the point and the circle, as between the beginning and the end. And these two are opposed to its exactness; because the point by reason of its indivisibility is immeasurable,[2] and the circle by reason of its arc cannot be exactly squared,[3] and therefore cannot be measured with precision. And, again, Geometry is most white, inasmuch as it is without spot of error, and most exact in itself and in its handmaid, which is called *Perspective*.

13. And the Heaven of Saturn has two properties, by which it may be compared to Astrology: one is, the slowness of its movement through the twelve

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[1] "The whiteness of the temperate star."
(*Par.*, 18. 68.)
"Jupiter
Seemed there like silver all inlaid with gold."
(*Par.*, 18. 96.)

[2] This is why the Deity is represented as a *point*. *Par.*, 28. 16, "A *point* beheld I." Ibid., 41—
"My Lady said, 'From that point
Dependent is the heaven and nature all.'"

[3] "As the geometrician, who endeavours
To square the circle, and discovers not,
By taking thought, the principle he wants."
(*Par.*, 33. 133.)
"The geometrician does not understand the squaring the circle, but he does not therefore dispute it" (*De Mon.*, iii. 3).

signs—for twenty-nine years and more, according to the Astrologers, are needed for its revolution; the other is, that Saturn is high above all the other planets. And these two properties are in Astrology; for in completing its circle, that is, in learning it, a very great space of time is needed, both on account of its demonstrations, which are more than those of any other science, and on account of the experience which is necessary to proper judgment therein. And, moreover, it is higher than all the others; because, as Aristotle says, in the beginning of *The Soul*, Science is of high nobility, because of the nobleness of its subject and its certainty; and this science, more than any of those above named, is high and noble on account of its high and noble subject (which is the movement of heaven), and high and noble by its certainty, which is without any defect, as coming from a most perfect and most regular principle. And if any conceive it to have a defect, it does not belong to it, but, as Ptolemy says, comes of our negligence and to that should be imputed.

Chapter XV.

1. After the comparison I have made of the first seven heavens, we must proceed to the others, which are three, as has been said many times. I say that the Starry Heaven may be compared to *Physics* on account of three of its properties, and to *Metaphysics* on account of other three; for it shows to us two things that are visible in it—its multitude of stars,

and its Galaxy,[1] that is, that white circle that the common people call the *Road of St. James;*[2] and it shows us one of its poles, and keeps the other hidden; and shows us a single motion from west to east; and another, that it makes from east to west, keeps almost concealed from us. Wherefore it is in order first to make the comparison with *Physics*, and afterwards with *Metaphysics.*

2. I say that the Starry Heaven shows us many stars;[3] for according to what the wise men of Egypt have seen, down to the last star that appears in their meridian, there are said to be one thousand and twenty-two clusters of stars, of which I speak.[4] And in this it bears the greatest resemblance to Physics, if we study subtly these three numbers, that is, *two* and *twenty* and *thousand.* Because by *two* we understand the local movement, which is necessarily from one point to another. And by *twenty* is signified the movement of modification; for seeing that we cannot proceed from ten upwards without modification by the other nine [figures] and itself, and as the most beautiful modification it can receive is that formed

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[1] "Even as distinct with less and greater lights,
Glimmers between the two poles of the world
The Galaxy, that maketh wise men doubt."
(*Par.*, 14. 97.)

[2] Biscioni tells us that the Milky Way was once thought by the people to be "a sign by night" for the pilgrims going to the shrine of St. James of Gallicia; which notion probably arose from the similarity of sound between *Galassia* and *Gallicia.*

[3] "Lights many the eighth sphere displays to you."
"The following heaven, that hath so many eyes."
"The heaven which lights so manifold make fair."
(*Par.*, 2. 64, 115, 130.)

[4] *i.e.* Of which *I* speak, and not counting those that others may speak of.

by itself, and the first which it receives is *twenty*, it is reasonable, therefore, that this number should signify the said movement. And by *thousand* is signified the movement of increase; because in name it is the largest of numbers,[1] and we can increase no further except by multiplying it. And these three motions only are shown by Physics, as is demonstrated in the fifth [chapter] of its first book.

3. And by reason of the Galaxy, this heaven has a great resemblance to Metaphysics. Because we must know that the philosophers have held divers opinions about this Galaxy.[2] For the Pythagoreans said that the sun at one time strayed from his path, and, traversing other paths not fitted to bear his heat, set on fire the place where he passed, and left there this appearance of burning. And I believe they were influenced by the fable of Phaëton,[3] which is told by Ovid in the beginning of the second of his *Metamorphoses*. Others said (like Anaxagoras and Democritus[4]) that the light of the sun was reflected from that part [of the heavens]. And these opinions they proved and reproved with demonstrative reasons. What Aristotle said about it we cannot exactly tell, because his opinion is not the same in one translation

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[1] For this reason, says Perticari, it is used frequently by Dante as a synonym for an infinite number (see *Inf.*, 12. 71; and *Par.*, 26. 78).

[2] The nature of the Milky Way was long a matter of dispute, but to Aristotle must be given the credit of having suspected that its light was formed by the concourse of innumerable stars (Aristotle, *Meteors*, i. 8).

[3] See Ovid, *Met.*, ii. 1. Dante refers to the story of Phaëton several times in the *Commedia* (see *Inf.*, 17. 107; *Purg.*, 4. 72; 29. 118; and *Par.*, 31. 125).

[4] These philosophers are both mentioned by Dante among the sages of the Pagan Limbo (*Inf.*, 4. 136).

as in the other.[1] And I think this was a mistake of the translators; because, in the new, he seems to say that it is a collection of vapours below the stars in that part, which always attract them; and this does not seem to be the true cause. In the old, he says that the Galaxy is no other than a multitude of fixed stars in that part, so very small that we cannot distinguish them, but from them proceeds that brightness[2] which we call the Galaxy. And it may be that the sky in this part is thicker, and therefore holds and reflects this light; and this opinion Avicenna and Ptolemy appear to share with Aristotle. Whence, seeing that the Galaxy is an effect of those stars which we cannot see, and understand only by their effects, and as Metaphysics treats of first substances, which likewise we can only understand by their effects, it is evident that the Starry Heaven has a great resemblance to Metaphysics.

4. Again, the pole which we see signifies things appreciable by our senses, of which, taking them as a whole, Physics treats; and the pole which we do not see signifies immaterial things, not perceptible by the senses, of which Metaphysics treats; and therefore this heaven has a great resemblance to both these sciences. Moreover, by its two movements it signifies these two sciences; because, by the movement in which it revolves daily and makes a new circuit from

[1] This passage has been thought by many commentators to prove Dante's ignorance of Greek; but Fraticelli thinks that, on the one hand, it may have been impossible to procure the original in Florence at that date, and, on the other, that Dante quotes Homer, whose poetry he says "is not translated into Latin" (*Conv.*, i. 7, par. 4).

[2] *Albore* refers especially to the brightness of *dawn*, and is used in *Purg.*, 24. 145, for the dawn itself, but in the plural—"annunziatrice degli albori."

point to point, it signifies those natural, corruptible things which daily complete their course, and whose matter changes from form to form; and of these Physics treats. And by the almost insensible movement which it makes from west to east, one degree in a hundred years,[1] it signifies those incorruptible things which had the beginning of their creation in God, and will have no end; and of these Metaphysics treats. And therefore I say that this motion signifies these [latter] things, because its revolution had a beginning and will have no end; because to end the revolution would be to return to the same point, which this heaven will never do in the course of this movement. For from the beginning of the world, little more than the sixth part hath been traversed; and we are already in the last age of the world, and verily await the consummation of the celestial movement.[2] And thus it is evident that the Starry heaven can, by many of its properties, be compared to Physics and to Metaphysics.

5. The Crystalline Heaven (which has been already enumerated as the *Primum Mobile*[3]) has a very

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[1] "Unto the circle that in heaven turns slowest."
(*Purg.* 2. 108.)

[2] Giuliani says that Dante believed the number of the elect to be already completed in his own time, and that the end of the world was not far off. He says of the saints in Paradise (*Par.* 30. 131)—

"Behold our seats so full to overflowing
That here henceforward are few people wanting!"

On this passage Scartazzini quotes St. Thomas Aquinas, who says, "Sed melius dicitur quod soli Deo cognitus numerus electorum in superna felicitate locandus, ut habet collecta pro vivis et defunctis" (*Summa Theol.*, p. i. qu. 23, art. 1).

[3] "Its motion is not by another meted,
But all the others measured are by this."
(*Par.*, 27. 115.)

evident resemblance to Moral Philosophy; because Moral Philosophy, as [St.] Thomas [1] says, in treating of the second [book] of the *Ethics*, prepares us for all the other sciences. Because, as the philosopher says, in the fifth of the *Ethics*, legal justice [2] directs us to study the sciences, and commands, in order that they be not abandoned, that they should be learned and taught; so the said heaven directs by its movement the daily revolution of all the others, by which they all daily receive and transmit here below the virtue of all their parts. For if its revolution did not thus direct, little of their [the other heavens'] virtue would reach here below, and little would be seen of them. Whence, if we suppose it possible that this ninth heaven could stand still, the third part of the heavens

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[1] St. Thomas Aquinas, known as the "Angelic Doctor," the most celebrated philosopher and theologian of the Middle Ages, was born in 1227, near Monte Cassino, of a noble family. At the age of five he was confided to the care of the monks at Monte Cassino, and afterwards entered the University of Naples; but, during his residence there, insisted upon renouncing the brilliant future marked out for him, and becoming, as Dante says, "one of the lambs of that holy flock conducted by St. Dominic." Having entered the Dominican Order, he went to Cologne, where he studied under Albertus Magnus, and afterwards followed his great master to Paris, in order to complete his studies with him. In 1248 he returned to Cologne as master in the college there for four years, when he was ordered back to Paris. He afterwards went to Rome, and from there to Naples, whence, after two years' residence, he was invited by Gregory X. to take part in the Council of Lyons, but on his way there was, as Dante expresses it, "thrust back to heaven." He died March 7, 1274, and it was supposed, of poison administered by the orders of Charles of Anjou. His principal works were the *Summa Theologica*, a commentary on the Scriptures, the *Contra Gentili*, and a *Commentary upon Aristotle*. Much of Dante's philosophy and theology is taken from St. Thomas, whom he quotes many times in the *Convito*, and mentions in the *Commedia*, in *Purg.*, 20. 69; *Par.*, 10. 98, *et seq.*; c. 12, 110, 114; c. 13, 32; c. 14, 6. See an interesting sketch of him in Milman's *Hist. Latin Christ.*, viii. 265.

[2] *Ethics*, v. 1. *Legal* justice as distinguished from *universal*.

would be still invisible to every part of the earth;[1] and Saturn would remain concealed for fourteen years and a half from every part of the earth, and Jupiter would be hidden for six years, and Mars for nearly one year, and the Sun for one hundred and eighty-two days and fourteen hours (I say *days*, that is, as much time as so many days would measure) and Venus and Mercury, almost like the Sun, would conceal and show themselves; and the Moon for fourteen days and a half would be hidden from all people. Verily there would be here below no production, nor life of animals nor of plants;[2] there would be neither night nor day, nor week, nor month, nor year;[3] but all the universe would be in disorder, and the movement of the stars would be in vain.[4] And in such wise, did Moral Philosophy cease, would the other sciences be hidden for a time, and there would be no production nor happy living, and in vain would they [these sciences] have been written or

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[1] If the daily revolution of the Starry Heaven were suspended (by the immobility of the ninth or Crystalline sphere), there would remain only its almost insensible revolution of one degree in a hundred years, so that up to the time of Dante (according to his idea of the date of creation) not even the third part of the stellar sphere would have been seen throughout the inhabited earth, and the planets would be hidden for half of their revolutions.

[2] "The soul of every brute and of the plants,
By its potential temperament attracts
The ray and motion of the holy lights."
(*Par.*, 7. 139.)

[3] "Its motion is not by another meted,
But all the others measured are by this."
(*Par.*, 27. 115.)

[4] "Much virtue in the heavens would be in vain,
And almost every power below here, dead."
(*Par.*, 10. 117.)

discovered of old.[1] Wherefore it is very evident that this heaven may be compared with Moral Philosophy.

6. Again, the Empyrean Heaven, by its peace, resembles the Divine Science,[2] which is full of all peace; which suffers no dispute whatsoever of opinions or sophistical arguments, by reason of the most excellent certitude of its subject, which is God. And of this He said to His disciples, "My peace I give unto you: my peace I leave with you,"[3] giving and bequeathing to them His doctrine, which is this science of which I speak. And of it Solomon says,[4] "There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and youthful handmaids without number. My dove, my undefiled, is but one." He calls all the [other] sciences queens, and faithful servants,[5]

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[1] Longfellow translates this passage (see note to his *Divine Comedy*, p. 699), "in vain would be the writings or discoveries of antiquity."

[2] Theology, or the Science of the Divine. [3] John xiv. 27.

[4] Song of Solomon vi. 8, 9. Here we have a most interesting correspondence with § 6 of the *Vita Nuova*, where Dante says, "About the same time that this lady (whom he had seen midway between himself and Beatrice) served as a screen for so much love on my part, there came to me a desire to record the name of this noblest one, and to accompany it with many ladies' names, and especially with the name of this gentlewoman. And I took the names of *sixty*, the fairest in that city where my lady was placed by the will of the Lord most high, and I composed an epistle in the form of a *sirvent*, which I will not transcribe; and I should not have mentioned it but to say that in composing it this marvellous thing happened, that in no other number would my lady's name suffer itself to be placed among the names of these ladies, except *the ninth*." Dante identifies the "queens" with the sciences and the heavens, and hence apparently identifies Beatrice in this passage with *Moral Science*, leaving the *Divine Science* to be identified with the tenth or Empyreal Heaven, and with "the *dove*, the *one*," answering to the "Wisdom" of the *Convito*, the true lady of Dante, the Contemplative Life, or second Beatitude, in distinction to the Active Life, or first Beatitude.

[5] In the original, *drude*. The word *drudo* came originally from the Old German *trût*, *drûd*, from *triuwi*, true or faithful, and meant first a true and faithful servant, St. Anthony being called "the *drudo* of

and handmaids;[1] and this he calls a *dove*, because it is without blemish of strife; and this he calls *perfect*, because it makes us behold perfectly that Truth[2] in which our soul finds rest.

7. And therefore, reasoning out thus the comparison of the heavens to the sciences, it may be seen that by the third heaven I mean Rhetoric, which is compared to the third heaven, as appears above.

CHAPTER XVI.

1. BY the resemblances spoken of, it may be seen who these motive Powers are to whom I speak; that they are the motive Powers of this [third heaven]; even as Boëthius and Tullius, who by the sweetness of their speech sent me, as has been said above,

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our Lord Jesus Christ." Then it came to be used by the troubadours in the sense of *knight* or *cavalier*, the true and faithful servant of a lady; and finally, with the decay of chivalry, sank to its present debased sense of "a lover," in the lowest significance of the word. In Dante's time it was used in both ways. He himself employs it in the bad sense in *Inf.*, 18. 134, and *Purg.*, 32. 155 (translated by Longfellow "paramour"), and in the good sense in *Par.*, 12. 55, where he calls St. Dominic "the faithful lover of the Christian faith." Here Longfellow goes against all the Italian authorities in using the expression "amorous paramour."

[1] "But as one who delights in music, in geometry, in grammar, in rhetoric, allows himself to be ensnared by love of these handmaidens, and for them neglects philosophy, their mistress; so another, absorbed in the love of philosophy, which is the discipline of the active life, abandons wisdom, which is the science of the causes of all things human and divine, and the mistress of philosophy" (Clemens Alex., *Stromata*, lib. i.).

[2] "The Truth, in which all intellects find rest."
(*Par.*, 28. 108.)

"Never sated is
Our intellect, unless the Truth illume it."
(*Par.*, 4. 126.)

to the love, that is, to the study, of this most noble lady, Philosophy, by means of the rays of their star, that is, by the writings of Philosophy; since in every science the written word is a star filled with light, which reveals to us that science. And this being explained, we may see the true meaning of the first verse of the canzone aforesaid, both by means of the literal and of the allegorical exposition. And by means of this same exposition, the second verse may be sufficiently understood, as far as the part which says, "*This showed another Lady unto me.*" Where it should be known that this lady is Philosophy, who is truly a lady full of sweetness, adorned with virtue, wonderful in knowledge, glorious in liberty, as the third book, where it treats of her nobility, will set forth.

2. And then where it says, "*If any would salvation find, Let him but fix his asking eyes on hers,*" the eyes of this lady are her *demonstrations*,[1] which, directed to the eyes of the intellect, enamour the soul, freed from all human conditions.[2] Oh, most sweet and ineffable looks, and sudden captors of the human mind, who appear in the demonstrations, that is, in the eyes of Philosophy, as she discourses with

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[1] In book iii. ch. 8 the "eyes and smile" of his lady are commented upon, and in the same book, ch. 15, they are explained: "The eyes of Wisdom are her demonstrations, whereby one sees the truth most certainly, but her persuasions are in her smile. . . . And in these two is felt that highest felicity of beatitude which is the chief good in Paradise."

[2] Giuliani reads, "free in all her *actions*," but the expression seems to correspond with Petrarch's line, "*Sciolti da tutte qualitati umane;*" and in the next paragraph we have the soul "free from doubt," etc., as well as in the *certainty* referred to in the paragraph from book iii. ch. 15, quoted above.

her servants![1] Verily in you is salvation,[2] making blessed him who looks upon you, and saving him from the death of ignorance and vice.

3. Where it says, "*If he fear not the anguish of deep sighs*," it is to be understood, if he fear not the labour of study, and that strife of doubt, which in the beginning[3] spring, ever multiplying, from this lady's looks, and then, her light continuing, are dissipated, almost like little morning clouds before the face of the sun[4] and the accustomed intellect remains free and full of certainty, like the air, purged and enlightened by the rays of noon.

4. The third verse, again, is explained by the literal exposition as far as where it says, "*And my soul wept.*" Here we should attend to the moral, which may be observed in these words: That man, for the sake of a greater friend, should not forget the services rendered by a lesser one, but if it be necessary to follow one and abandon another, he ought to follow the better one, abandoning the other with some honest expression of grief; whereby he gives reason to the one he follows, to love him all the more.

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[1] *Drudi* used as in previous chapter (see note 5, p. 121).

[2] Here "salute" is used in the sense of *salvation*. In the *Vita Nuova*, § 10, "this most noble lady, the destroyer of all the vices and queen of the virtues, refused me her most sweet *salutation* ('salute'), in which lay all my beatitude." In *Conv.*, iii. 15, Dante explains that when he said his lady (Philosophy) was cruel to him, and smiled not on him, he meant that he could not see her persuasions, nor understand her demonstrations.

[3] "Therefore springs up, in fashion of a shoot,
Doubt at the foot of truth."
(*Par.*, 4. 130.)

[4] "As the sun of summer dissipates the clouds."
(*De Mon.*, ii. 1.)

5. Then where it says, "*And to mine eyes*," it means no other than to call that hour momentous[1] when the first demonstration of this lady entered the eyes of my intellect, and was the most immediate cause of this love. And where it says, "*such as I*," is meant the soul freed from low and base delights, and vulgar customs, and gifted with genius and memory. And then it says, "*killeth*," and afterwards, "*wrought my death*," which seems contrary to what has been said above of the saving power of this lady. Wherefore we must notice that here one side speaks, and there the other; disputing in diverse ways, as we have set forth above. Whence it is no wonder that we find here a *yes*, and there a *no*, if we notice carefully who goes up and who down.[2]

6. Then in the fourth verse, where it says, "*a spirit of love*," is meant "a thought born of my studies." Therefore be it known that by *Love* in this allegory is always to be understood that study which is the application of the enamoured soul to that thing of which it is enamoured.[3] Then where it says, "*Such*

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[1] *Forte*, interpreted by Giuliani as meaning violent, powerful, or effective; by Fraticelli, terrible or sorrowful; by Pederzini, high or mighty, seems to me to be best rendered by "momentous," in the sense of solemnly important.

[2] That is, who conquers and who fails in this strife.

[3] *Vita Nuova*, § 25, Dante says, "It may here be objected by some one worthy to express all such objections, and from what I have said of Love, that I have spoken of it as if it were a real thing, not only as an intellectual substance, but as a corporeal substance. Which is, in reality, false, because Love is not of itself a substance, but an accident in substance," etc. Compare this with § 20, where Dante quotes Guido Guinicelli, and says, "Love and the gentle (*noble*) heart are but one thing." In *Conv.*, iii. 12 (see note 3 par. 2), Love is defined as the *study* given to gain the love of this lady; in the fourteenth chapter of the same book, it is said that "Philosophy has Wisdom for material subject, and Love for form," and that "Love is part of Philosophy;"

miracles of beauty thou shalt see," it declares that through her shall be seen these miracles of beauty; and says truly that the beauty of marvels is to see the causes of them; which she demonstrates, as in the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, the Philosopher seems to feel, saying that by the sight of these beauties do men begin to be enamoured of this lady.[1] And of this word "marvels" we shall speak more fully in the following book.[2] All that follows in this canzone has been sufficiently explained by the former exposition. And thus, at the end of this second book, I say and affirm, that the lady with whom I was enamoured, after my first love, was the most beautiful and most virtuous daughter of the Emperor of the Universe,[3] to whom Pythagoras gives the name of *Philosophy*. And here ends the second Book, which is set forth as the first course [of this Banquet].

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while in book iv. ch. 1 it is defined "according to the unanimous opinion of the wise men who discourse of him, . . . as that which brings together and unites the lover with the beloved," which answers to the definition in ch. 2 of book iii., "Love, taken in its *true* sense, is no other than the spiritual union of the soul with the beloved object."

[1] *Met.*, i. 1. [2] *Conv.*, iii. 14.

[3] See note 4, ch. 6, par. 1, of this book, and last par. of *Conv.*, iii. 12, "Oh, most noble and excellent heart, that hath communion with the Bride of the Emperor of Heaven! and not only Bride, but most beloved Sister and Daughter."

BOOK III.

CANZONE II.[1]

1.

LOVE, that within my mind doth hold discourse
Of this my Lady, filled with strong desire
Doth often tell me wondrous things of her,
The mind, bewildered, fails to comprehend.
But such sweet music soundeth in his words,
My soul that listens, and that feels their power,
Saith, "Woe is me, who cannot tell again
What I have heard of this dear Lady mine!"
And certes it befits that first I leave
(Would I repeat what I do hear of her)
All that my intellect cannot comprehend,
And out of that I understand great part,
Because I know not any fitting words.
Therefore, if my poor rhymes are full of faults,
And cannot fitly celebrate her praise,
Blame my inadequate powers first of all,
And then our speech, that hath not force enough
To tell again all Love himself hath said.

2.

The sun, that daily circleth round the world,
Sees nought so noble as in that blest hour
He shines upon the place wherein doth dwell
That Lady, of whom Love doth talk to me.
All the celestial Powers gaze on her,

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[1] The resemblances between this canzone and the first of the *Vita Nuova* are so great, that I have inserted a translation of the latter as an Appendix to this book.

And all her faithful lovers here below
Find her within their thoughts, whene'er it be
That Love hath made them feel her [1] perfect peace.
And He who gives her, taketh such delight
In her sweet being, He informeth her
With His own nature, more than we can claim.
And that pure spirit of hers,
That from on high receives such holiness,[2]
Shines through the mortal frame wherein she dwells,
And by her beauty is made manifest.
And the eyes of those on whom her light doth shine,
Send messengers to the heart filled with desire,
That take the air again in form of sighs.

3.

And Power divine descends to dwell in her,
As in the angel that beholds His face;
And let the lady fair who doubts my word,
Go where she goes, and study all her ways.
There where she speaks, descends
A spirit from heaven, that compelleth faith;
For the high virtue that resides in her
Is other than the little we possess.
The actions sweet she shows to other men,
Go calling Love to put each one to proof,
In such a voice as seems his very own.
Of her it may be said: Noble is that
In every lady found, that's found in her;

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[1] See *Conv.*, iii. 13, par. 2, where Dante explains that it is "the peace of *this lady*" to which he refers; otherwise the original is extremely ambiguous, and might mean the peace of *Love*.

[2] *Salute*, which is here used to express the holiness of God as imparted to "this lady," is used by Dante in almost as many ways as *amore*. As Renier has pointed out, he seems to purposely confound *il saluto* with *la salute* (the former having more properly the meaning of salutation, and the latter of health or salvation); and in sonnet 19 of the *Canzoniere* (Ed. Frat.) he uses the latter word in both senses in the course of a few lines—

"To whom was worthy, gave she her *salute*
With those dear eyes of hers, sweet and mild,
Filling the heart of each with holiness.
I think that she was born in heaven above,
And to this earth for our *salvation* came:
And blessèd is he who may near her be."

(See note to par. 6, ch. 8, book ii.)

And fair, so far as it resembles her.[1]
And we may say of her: Her aspect wins
Our swift consent to seeming miracles:
And thus she strengtheneth this faith of ours,
As was from all eternity ordained.

4.

That which we read in her sweet countenance,
Speaks to us of the joys of Paradise;
In those dear eyes, I say, and that sweet smile,
Which bringeth Love to her, as to his home.
Their brightness overpowers our intellect
As the sun's rays dazzle a feeble sight.
Nor can I bear to fix mine eyes on her,
And therefore must content me with brief speech.
Her beauty raineth little flames of fire,
Full of a spirit that inspires love,
And in our nature quickens all good thoughts;
Destroying, like the thunderbolt from heaven,
The inborn vices that make others vile.
Whence, if a lady hear her beauty blamed,
Because it shows not still and meek[2] enough,
Let her behold tranquillity's[2] sweet self.
For this is she who humbleth the perverse,
And was the thought of Him who moves the worlds.

5.

Canzone mine, methinks in contrariwise
Thou speakest, to a sister[3] that thou hast;
For this same Lady thou dost paint so meek,
She calleth cruel, and full of high disdain.
Thou knowest the sky is ever clear and bright,
And of itself is never shadow there,
But to our eyes, for all-sufficient cause,

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[1] "It seems
That all that's fair on earth resembles her."
(Guido Guinicelli.)

[2] See note to first canzone, ver. 3, for *umile* (or "meek"), used in the sense of "peaceful."

[3] By the *sister Canzone* Fraticelli thinks the tenth *Ballata* is meant, beginning—

"Ye who do know how to discourse of love,"

as Dante alludes to the composition of a *Ballata* on his lady's cruelty in ch. 9. of this book. (For the *Ballata*, see the Appendix to this canzone.)

The stars [1] themselves seem sometimes half obscured:
And therefore, when thy sister calls her proud,
Do not consider what she says as truth,
But only such as seemeth truth to her;
Because my soul did fear, and fears her still,
So that all things to me seem filled with scorn,
Wherever she may bend her eyes on me.
And thus excuse thyself, if need there be;
And when thou canst, present thyself to her,
And say to her, "Madonna, if thou wilt,
I'll speak of thee wherever I may go."

APPENDIX TO CANZONE II.

BALLATA X.

(See p. 129, note 3.)

1.

Ye who do know how to discourse of love,
Now listen to my ballad pitiful,
That of a scornful lady speaks to you,
Whose power hath quite deprived me of all heart.[2]

2.

So great disdain she shows to all who gaze
Upon her, that they lower their eyes for fear;
Since from those eyes of hers seems to gleam
The pictured form of cruelty itself.
And yet within they bear an image sweet [3]
That makes the gentle soul say, "Pity me!"
So strong its power, wherever it is seen,
It draweth sighs from the beholder's heart.[4]

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[1] Fraticelli thinks Dante here says "the star," meaning the sun; but it seems to me more probable that it is one of many instances where he uses the singular for the plural—as, for example, in the second canzone of the *Vita Nuova*, where he uses the singular in the poem, the plural in the prose (§ 23). See also book iii. ch. 9, par. 5.

[2] See stanza 5, lines 1–4, of Canzone II.

[3] "Love" (see next stanza).

[4] See last two lines of second stanza of Canzone II.

3.

She seems to say, "Never will I be meek
To any one who gazeth in mine eyes;
Seeing I bear there that most noble Lord [1]
Whose arrows keen thou hast already felt." [2]
And certes I believe she guards him there
To gaze upon, whene'er it pleaseth her.
So is a virtuous lady wont to do
When that she sees her honour is assailed.[3]

4.

Nor can I hope that somewhat merciful
To others she will ever show herself;
So cruel is she in her beauty's pride,
This lady, who doth feel Love in her eyes.
But though she may endeavour Love to hide,
And keep his comfort shut away from me,
Still the fierce power he himself doth give
Arms my desires against her disdain.[4]

(*Canzoniere*, Ed. Frat., p. 156.)

FIRST CANZONE OF THE "VITA NUOVA."

I.

Ladies who have intelligence of love,
Of mine own lady I would speak with you;
Not that I think to finish all her praise,
But would discourse of her to ease my mind.

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[1] "And to begin, I call upon that Lord
That dwelleth ever in my lady's eyes."
(Canzone III. ver. 1.)

And in the explanation of this verse, book iv. ch. 2, Dante says here, "I call upon *Truth*, Truth being that Lord who dwells in the eyes, that is, the demonstrations, of Philosophy," "she being the loving use of Wisdom."

[2] I have followed Witte's suggestion in reading "che v'ha fatto" instead of "che m'ha fatto."

[3] That is, she is wont to be cold and disdainful.

[4] These last two lines are very ambiguous, but I have endeavoured to take that meaning most in harmony with the context.

I say that, thinking over all her worth,
Love makes himself so sweetly to be felt,
That if my courage do not fail me here,
I should by my discourse make all men love.
Nor do I wish to speak so loftily
As to affright myself from mine intent;
But of her noble state I wish to treat,
And of herself, in light and simple words,
Ladies and loving maidens, now with you;
'Tis not a thing for speech with any else.

2.

An angel spake out with divine intent,
And said, "O Sire, in the world we see
A miracle in action, which proceeds
From out a soul whose light shines even hither.
And Heaven, that lacketh for no other thing
Save only her, doth pray its Lord for her,
And all the saints do cry aloud to Thee."
Pity alone defends our part in her,
Since, hearing of my lady, God did say,
"My well belovèd, suffer that in peace
Your hope remain, so long as pleaseth me,
There where one dwells who dreads the loss of her
And who will tell the wretched souls in hell,
'Mine eyes have seen the hope of all the blest.'"

3.

My lady is desired in the high heavens:
Now, therefore, would I tell you of her worth.
I say—whoe'er would noble lady seem
Must go with her; for when she walks the way,
Love casteth such a frost on evil hearts,
That all their thoughts are chilled, and perish there,
While such as may endure to look on her,
Must either become noble or else die.
And if it may be some one worthy is
To gaze on her, he feeleth all her power,
And finds his soul's salvation come from her,
Humbling him so that he forgets all wrong.
And God for greater grace hath given her this—
That none can end ill who have talked with her.

4.

Love saith concerning her, "A mortal thing
How can it be so lovely and so pure?"
And gazing on her, to himself doth swear
A new creation God would make in her.
She hath that colour almost like a pearl,
Which fits a lady, but not to excess.
To her belongs all good Nature can give,
And by her beauty is all other proved;
While from her eyes, where'er she turns her gaze,
Spirits of love do issue, all aflame,
Piercing the eyes of whoso looks on them,
To find their way directly to the heart.
And you will see Love pictured in her smile,
Whence none can look upon her steadfastly.

5.

Canzone, I know that thou wilt go to speak
To many ladies, when I have sent thee forth;
So now I bid thee, having brought thee up
As Love's own daughter, young and meek and mild,
That whomsoe'er thou meetest thou shouldst pray,
"Teach me the way to go; for I am sent
To her, in whose praise I am so adorned."
And if thou wouldst not have thy journey vain,
Do not abide where vulgar people are;
But seek to make thy hidden meaning clear
Only to man or woman courteous,
Who will conduct thee by a speedy road.
And thou shalt find Love dwelling where she dwells;
To both commend me, as behoveth thee.

CHAPTER I.

1. As we have said in the last book, my second love had its beginning in the compassionate looks of a lady;[1] which love then, finding my life responsive

[1] Here Dante begins, as in the previous book, with the literal translation, and then proceeds to the allegorical. Compare § 36 of the *Vita Nuova* (see Appendix II. to book ii. ch. 2).

to its ardour, like a fire, from a small, kindled into a great flame;[1] so that not only waking, but sleeping, its light shone in upon my brain.[2] And how great was the desire to behold her, with which love inspired me, can be neither told nor understood. And this desire was not for her alone, but for all persons having any relation with her, either by acquaintance or kindred.[3] Oh! how many were the nights when the eyes of others were closed in sleep, that mine were gazing fixedly on the habitation of my love![4] And as such a rapidly growing fire must needs burst out (for it was impossible that it should remain concealed), I was seized with a desire to speak of love, which I could no longer restrain. And though I could get but little help from my own counsel, nevertheless either by the will of love or mine own readiness, I sought this [counsel] many times, and so deliberating, saw that, speaking of love, there was no more beautiful nor more profitable discourse than that which commends the person beloved.

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[1] "A little spark is followed by great flame."
(*Par.* I. 34.)

"This the beginning is, this is the spark
Which afterwards dilates to vivid flame,
And like a star in heaven, is sparkling in me."
(*Par.* 24. 145.)

[2] "The divine delight which shone upon me."
(*Par.* 27. 95.)

[3] This reference of Dante's to the "acquaintances" and "kindred" of Philosophy may possibly explain his mention of the *father* and *brother* of Beatrice in the *Vita Nuova* (see §§ 22, 33, and 34).

[4] "O virgins holiest! if ever hunger,
Vigils, or cold for you I have endured,
My need impels me their reward to claim."

See also ch. 9, where he speaks of the fatigue of his studies, and his epistles to Morello Malaspina and his Florentine friend, where he speaks of his "assiduous meditations on the things of heaven and earth," and "the labour of unremitting study."

2. And in this deliberation I was guided by three reasons; of which the first was self-respect, which is the origin of all the others; for, as all can see, there is no more lawful nor courteous method of doing honour to one's self than by honouring one's friend; because, as there can be no friendship between those who are dissimilar, where we see friendship there must be likeness; and where there is likeness, praise and reproach must be common to both. And from this reason we may learn two great lessons: one is, not to desire any vicious person as a friend, because men would form a bad opinion of him who sought the friendship of such a one; the other is, that no one should blame his friend in public, because in so doing he but puts his finger in his own eye, [as we see] if we take due notice of the preceding reason.

3. The second reason was the desire for the duration of this friendship; whence we must know that (as the Philosopher says in the ninth of the *Ethics*[1]), in the friendship of persons of unequal station, some mutual relation is necessary for its preservation which should reduce that dissimilarity as much as possible, as in the case of master and servant. For although the servant cannot render to his master such benefits as he receives from him, he ought, nevertheless, to return the best he can by such solicitude and promptness, that that which is unlike in itself becomes like by the demonstrations of good will, which show friendship, and confirm and preserve it. Therefore I, considering myself lower than this lady,

[1] Book ix. ch. 1, Aristotle speaks of a certain reciprocity which must exist in cases of dissimilar friendships, in order to preserve them. And see Dante's *Letter to Can Grande*, par. 3.

and seeing myself benefited by her, endeavour to praise her to the best of my ability, which, if not in itself equal to her, at least shows the ready will that would do more if it could, and thus makes itself more like this gentle lady.

4. The third reason is an argument of foresight; because, as Boëthius says, "it is not enough to see only that which is before our eyes, that is, the present, and therefore we are given foresight, which looks beyond to that which may happen."[1] I say that I thought I might have been reproached for light-mindedness by many behind my back, who had heard that I had changed from my first love. Wherefore, to take away this reproach, there was no better argument than to tell who this lady was who had so changed me. For by her excellence may be gained some conception of her power, and by the understanding of her exceeding power it may be comprehended how any steadfastness of soul might be shaken by her; and therefore I should not be considered either light or unstable. Whence I undertook to praise this lady,[2] and if not adequately, at least as well as I was able at first, and I began by saying, "*Love, that within my mind doth hold discourse.*"

5. This canzone has three principal parts. The first is the whole of the first verse, which serves as an introduction. The second consists of the three

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[1] "And even as he who, acting, still forecasts,
And ever seems providing for the future."
(*Inf.*, 24. 25.)
And see *Purg.*, 12. 76, where Virgil is spoken of as "always attentive to the things to come."

[2] See *Vita Nuova*, § 43, where Dante hopes "to write that concerning her which hath not yet been written of any woman."

following verses, in which is treated that which is meant to be said, that is, the praise of this gentle lady; and the first begins, "*The sun, that daily circleth round the earth.*" The third part is the fifth and last verse, addressed directly to the canzone, in which it is purged[1] of all dubiousness [as to its meaning]. And these three parts are now to be discussed in due order.

CHAPTER II.

1. TAKING up, then, the first part, designed to serve as a proem to this canzone, I say that it should be divided into three parts; because it touches first upon the ineffable quality of the theme; secondly, it describes my incapacity to treat it perfectly, and this second part begins, "*And certes it befits that first I leave.*" And finally, I excuse my insufficiency, which should not be considered my fault, and this begins when I say, "*Therefore, if my poor rhymes are full of faults.*"

2. I say, then, "*Love, that within my mind doth hold discourse,*"[2] where we have first to see who this speaker is, and what that place is in which I say he speaks. Love, taken in the true sense,[3] and subtly considered, is no other than the spiritual union of the soul and the thing beloved, to which union, by force of its own nature, the soul hastens, sooner or later,[4]

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[1] "And purge away the cloud that darkens o'er thee."
(*Purg.*, 28. 90.)

[2] Quoted by Casella, *Purg.*, 2. 112.

[3] See note 3, *Conv.*, ii. 16, par. 6, on *Love*.

[4] "So comes the captive soul into desire,
Which is a motion spiritual, and ne'er rests
Until she doth enjoy the thing beloved."
(*Purg.*, 18. 31.)

according to whether it is free or impeded. And the reason for this natural impulse may be this: every substantial form[1] proceeds from its First Cause, which is God, as is written in the book of *Causes*,[2] and it is not differentiated by this [First Cause], which is most simple, but by secondary causes, and by the matter into which it descends.[3] Therefore, in the same book it is written, in treating of the infusion of Divine goodness, "And this goodness and its gifts become diverse, by the concurrence of the thing which receives them." Whence, as each effect contains something of the nature of its cause (as Alfarabio[4] says, when he affirms that that which is the cause of a circular body has in some way something circular in its being), so every form partakes in some degree of the Divine essence;[5] not that the Divine nature is divided and put into these forms, but that they partake of it almost in the same way that the other stars partake of the nature of the sun. And the nobler the form, the more does it retain of this

[1] Substantial form, in scholastic language, meant that which united with primitive matter, differentiates into species (Fraticelli).

[2] By Albertus Magnus (see note to ch. 5, par. 8).

[3] "Thence it descends to the last potencies,
Downward from act to act becoming such
That only brief contingencies it makes;
And these contingencies I hold to be
Things generated, which the heaven produces
By its own motion, with seed and without."
(*Par.*, 13. 61-66.)

[4] Alfarabio was an Arabian philosopher and physician, a follower of Aristotle, as interpreted by the Neo-Platonic commentators. He died in 950. In the passage quoted by Dante, he seems to follow the Platonic theory of ideas.

[5] "All things, whate'er they be,
Have order among themselves, and this is form,
That makes the universe resemble God.
(*Par.*, 1. 103.)

[Divine] nature.[1] Whence the human soul, which is the noblest of all forms generated beneath the heavens, receives more of the Divine nature than any other. And as it is most natural to desire to exist in God (because, as we read in the book above quoted, the first of all things is being, and before it is nothing), the human soul naturally desires with all its might to be. And because its being depends upon God, and is preserved by God, it naturally longs and desires to be united to God, that its being may be strengthened.[2] And as in the gifts of human nature we see the Divine reason manifesting itself[3] [in greater or less degree], it follows that the human soul naturally seeks to unite itself spiritually to these [gifts of nature], the more strongly and the more quickly as they appear to it the more perfect; which appearance depends upon whether the consciousness of the soul [that is, the spiritual insight] is clear or impeded.[4]

[1] "For the blest ardour that irradiates all things,
In that that most resembles it, is brightest."
(*Par.*, 7. 74.)

"The primal radiance that lighteth all,
In modes as many is received therein,
As there are splendours wherewith it is mated."
(*Par.*, 29. 136.)

[2] "But your own life immediately inspires
Supreme Beneficence, and enamours it
So with Himself it can nought else desire."
(*Par.*, 7. 142.)

[3] "The Primal Bounty sendeth His gifts unto all things by an affluence, . . . of which each receives [in greater or less degree] according to the manner of its power and its being" (*Conv.*, iii. 7).

[4] This passage was hopelessly corrupt in the original texts, and therefore I have followed as closely as possible the theory of Dante as explained in other places, which seems to be, that as in the gifts of nature the soul perceives the Divine influence from whence they proceed, she seeks with more or less desire to become one with them, according as they manifest more or less of that Divine influence or perfection. And the power of perceiving this perfection depends also upon the condition of the soul itself.

And this union is what we call Love, by which we may know what is within the soul, seeing in the world without what things it loves. This Love, that is, the union of my soul with this noble lady, in whom so much of the Divine light was revealed to me, is the speaker that I tell of; since from him continual thoughts were born, studying and searching into the virtue of this lady who was spiritually made one with my soul.[1]

3. The place wherein I say that he speaks is the *mind;* but to say that it is the mind does not explain it any the more, and therefore we have to see what this *mind* properly signifies. I say, then, that the Philosopher, in the second of *The Soul* (in his division of its powers), says that the principal powers of the soul are three—to *live*, to *feel*, and to *reason;*[2] and he

[1] (See *Conv.*, iv. 7, par. 1.) "Among the Scholiasts the symbolism of *marriage* was continually used in speaking of the union between the *active intelligence* and the *possible intellect*, to express the passage from the condition of mere attitude to the act of pure understanding." "It is the opinion of Aristotle," says Averrhoes, commenting upon the *Metaphysics*, "that the *form* of men, in so far as they are men, only exists by their union with the intelligence, which he has shown, in his book *On the Soul*, to be our active and motive principle. Now, the abstract intelligences, in so far as they are abstract, are in two ways the principle of that of which they are the principle; that is, according as they are its motive, and according as they are its end. Therefore the *active intelligence*, in so far as it is abstract, and is our principle, most assuredly moves us *as the beloved one moves her lover;* and if everything moved must necessarily be connected with that which is its final cause, and which moves it, it follows that we must finally be united to that abstract intelligence" (Perez, *La Beatrice Svelata*, p. 206).

[2] "And forms a single soul
That lives, and feels, and on itself revolves."
(*Purg.*, 25. 74.)

Revolving on itself means that by reflection upon itself it acquires the consciousness of its own existence. The same passage of Aristotle is quoted by Dante in book iv. ch. 7; and St. Thomas Aquinas says, "*Dicendum est quod eadem numero est anima in homine, sensitiva, ed intellectiva, et nutritiva.*"

also says to *move*, but this may be included in *feeling*, because every soul that *feels*, whether with one sense or all the senses, *moves*, since motion is a power conjoined with feeling. And, according to what he says, it is very evident that these powers are so connected together that the one is the basis of the other. And that which is the foundation may be separated from the next one, but the one which is built upon it cannot be divided from it. Whence the *vegetative* power, by which we live, is the foundation upon which we *feel*, that is, see, hear, taste, smell, and touch; and this vegetative power of itself is a soul,[1] as we see in all the plants.[2] The *sensitive* [soul] cannot exist without it, as there is nothing that feels that has not life.[3] And this *sensitive* soul is the basis of the *intellectual*, that is, of reason;[4] and therefore in living mortal beings the reasoning power is not found without the sentient; but the sensitive [soul] is found without the rational, as in beasts and birds and fishes, and all the lower animals.[5] And the soul that compre-

[1] In *Purg.*, 4. 5, Dante speaks of "that error which believes one soul above another kindled in us;" by which he wished to contradict the belief of the Platonists, that there were three separate souls—the vegetative, in the liver; the sensitive, in the heart; and the intellectual, in the brain (see Longfellow's note to *Purg.*, 4. 5).

[2] "The active virtue, being made a soul
As of a plant."
(*Purg.*, 25. 52.)

[3] "Then works so much, that now it moves and feels
Like a sea-fungus."
(*Purg.*, 25. 55.)

[4] "As soon as in the fœtus
The articulation of the brain is perfect,
The Primal Motor turns to it well-pleased,
At such great art of nature, and inspires
It with a new spirit, all replete with power."
(*Purg.*, 25. 68.)

[5] Pederzini says that Dante follows here (as in the passage quoted

hends all these powers is the most perfect of all. And the human soul, possessing the nobility of the highest power, that is, reason, partakes of the Divine nature in the form of sempiternal intelligence; because the soul, by virtue of this sovereign power, is so ennobled and set free from matter, that the Divine light, as in the angels, can shine through her;[1] and man is therefore called a *divine animal*[2] by the philosophers.

4. In this most noble part of the soul are other powers, as the Philosopher says more especially in the third of *The Soul*, where he says that therein resides a power called *scientific*, and one called *reasoning* or *deliberative;* and with this are certain powers, as Aristotle says in the same place, such as the *inventive* and *judicatory*. And all these most noble powers, and the others included in this excellent power [of the reason], are comprised in the word whose meaning we wished to find, that is, *mind*. Whence it is evident that by *mind* we mean this highest and noblest part of the soul.

5. And that this was so understood we may see, because this mind was only predicated of man and of Divine substances, as is plainly shown by Boëthius,[3]

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above in note 1) the idea of Empedocles and Pythagoras, that plants and animals possessed souls as well as men.

[1] "Thou thinkest that to me thy thought doth pass
From Him who is the first."
(*Par.*, 15. 55.)
"Light intellectual, replete with love."
(*Par.*, 30. 40.)

[2] "That supreme Hippocrates, whom nature
Made for the animals she holds most dear."
(*Purg.*, 29. 137.)

[3] "In mihi et qui sapientium mentibus inseruit" (*De Cons. Phil.*, lib. i. pro. 4).

who first predicated it of men, where he says to Philosophy, "Thou and God, who put thee in the mind of man;" and then predicates it of God, when he says to Him, "All things Thou dost produce after the Divine Exemplar, Thou the most beautiful, carrying in Thy mind the beautiful world."[1] Nor was it ever said of one of the lower animals, nor even of many men appearing deficient in this noblest part, could it, or ought it, to be said; and nevertheless such are called in the Latin tongue[2] *amenti* or *dementi*, that is, without mind. Whence we may now see what mind is; that it is that culminating and most precious part of the soul, which is Deity.[3] And this is the place where I say that Love holds discourse with me of my lady.

CHAPTER III.

1. NOT without cause do I say that this Love performed its work within my mind, but I say it intentionally, that it may be understood what Love this is by the place that it chooses. Whence we may see that everything, as is said above, for the reason before named, has its especial love;[4] as simple bodies [the elements] have a natural love for their own

[1] "In cuncta superno Ducis ab exemplo pulchrum pulcherrimus ipse Mundum mente gerens, similique imagine formans" (*De Cons. Phil.* iii. 9).

[2] Or *grammar*. The grammarian, Sextus Pompeius Festus, wrote, "*Demens* dictur qui de sua mente discesserit, et *Amens* qui a mente abierit."

[3] Petrarch (Canz. 7) says that "the Divine makes part of our nature, and occupies its highest place."

[4] "Neither Creator nor one creature ever
Was destitute of love."
(*Purg.*, 17. 91.)

place;[1] wherefore *earth* always falls towards the centre,[2] and *fire* [is drawn] towards the circumference above, near the Heaven of the Moon,[3] and therefore always mounts towards that.

2. The primary composed bodies,[4] such as minerals, have a love for the place wherein they are generated, and here they increase, and receive vigour and power from it. Wherefore we see that the loadstone always receives power from the place of its generation.

3. Plants,[5] which are the first of animate things [the lowest in the scale], have an evident preference for certain places, according to the requirements of their nature; and therefore we find certain plants almost always growing near water; and certain others on the tops of mountains, and others on their slopes,[6] or at the foot of hills, which, if transplanted, either die

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[1] "Most parts of the earth with one accord tend towards the centre, and most flames with one accord tend to rise" (*De Mon.*, i. 17).

[2] "Towards the middle
Where everything of weight unites together."
(*Inf.*, 22. 73.)

"The point
To which things heavy draw from every side."
(*Inf.*, 34. 110.)

The centre of the earth, according to the Ptolemaic system, being the centre of the universe.

[3] The ancients believed that the sphere of fire was beneath the concave of the Heaven of the Moon, towards which it was attracted.

"This bears away the fire towards the moon."
(*Par.*, 1. 115.)

[4] The first bodies composed of the so-called four elements.

"I see the air, I see the fire,
The water, and the earth, and all their mixtures."
(*Par.*, 7. 124.)

[5] "Plants also are animate beings" (*De Mon.*, i. 4).

[6] *Piaggia*, sometimes translated "sea-shore," here means a mountain-slope, as in *Inf.*, 1. 29, where we have "the barren slope."

altogether or languish, like things deprived of the place they love.[1]

4. The lower animals have a more evident love, not only for places, but, as we see, for each other.

5. Men have their especial love for perfect and virtuous things;[2] and therefore man, although his form consists of one sole substance, because of his nobility has in himself something of the nature of all these things,[3] and may, therefore, and does, possess all these affections.

6. Therefore, as far as the nature of *simple bodies* predominates in man, he naturally likes to descend; and therefore to move his body upwards causes greater fatigue.

7. By the *secondary* nature (of compound bodies) man[4] loves the place and the time of his generation, and therefore each is more powerful in that place and time than in any other. Whence we read in the stories of Hercules, and in Ovid the greater,[5] and in Lucan and the other poets, that in the combat with the giant Antæus, every time that the giant was weary, and stretched himself out on the ground (either

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[1] Many of the texts read "of their friend," in the neutral sense, says Pederzini, of "that which they love;" but I have followed the reading of Giuliani, who brings to support it the words of Albertus Magnus: "Videmus quasdam plantarum in uno loco convalescere, quæ si ad clima proximum transferantur, nulla cultura convalescere possunt" (*De Natura Locorum*, cap. 2, p. 264).

[2] "This is in mortal hearts the motive power
That binds together and unites the earth."
(*Par.*, I. 116.)

[3] That is, of all the lower divisions of the kingdom of nature, because the higher nature comprehends the inferior ones.

[4] The nominative *man* is understood here, but is not in the text.

[5] That is, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (bk. ix. 183), so called by the ancients as being his longest work.

by his own will or by the strength of Hercules), force and vigour flowed into him from the earth, in which and from which he had his being. Hercules, perceiving this, finally seized him, and holding him tight, and lifting him off the ground, held him so long, without letting him touch the earth, that he conquered him, and by this stratagem killed him. And this battle was in Africa, according to the testimony of books.[1]

8. And by the *third* nature, that of *plants*, man loves certain food, not as a matter of sense, but because it is nutritious; and such food does the work of this nature most perfectly, but other food only imperfectly.[2] And therefore we see that certain food will make men handsome, and strong-limbed, and of fine colour; and certain other kinds have a contrary effect.

9. And by the *fourth* nature, that of the *animals* (or the *sensitive*), man is made capable of another love, by which he loves according to the perceptions of the senses, like the beasts; and this love in man has especial need of control, because of its overpowering influence, in the pleasures more particularly of sight and touch.[3]

10. And by the *fifth* and last nature, that is, the *truly human*, or, to speak more correctly, the angelical, that is, the *rational*,[4] man loves Truth and Virtue; and

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[1] See Lucan's *Pharsalia*, iv. 592.

[2] Here Giuliani says that Dante follows the doctrine of Albertus Magnus, in his *De Nutrimento et Nutribili*, v. 1, 2.

[3] Giuliani reads, "by the fourth nature of animals, that is, the sensitive;" and, "by which he loves according to sensual appetite;" and, "by the pleasures of *taste* and touch." Fraticelli follows Witte in reading "*sight* and touch" as more properly the causes of sensual love.

[4] *Conv.*, iii. 7, par. 3.

from this love is born that true and perfect friendship[1] from virtuous intercourse, of which the philosopher speaks in the eighth of the *Ethics*,[2] where he treats of friendship.

11. Whence, since this [highest] nature is called *Mind*, as has been explained above, I said that Love held discourse within the mind, that it might be understood that this Love was born of this most noble nature, that is, of Truth and Virtue, and also to exclude any false opinion of me, by which my love might be suspected of being a sensuous delight. And I say then, "*filled with strong desire*," to convey an idea of its persistence and its fervour. And I say that it often tells me things that bewilder me. And I speak truly: because my thoughts, when occupied with her, would often infer things of her that I could not understand, and I became so bewildered that I looked almost like one crazed;[3] even as he who looks straight before him, and first sees the things near him very plainly; then, looking farther on, sees them less plainly; then, still beyond, begins to doubt; and, looking very far away, the sight is lost, and perceives nothing.

12. And this is one of the ineffable things that I have taken for a theme; and afterwards I relate the other when I say, "*such sweet music soundeth in his words.*" I say that my thoughts, which are the words of Love,[4] sing so sweetly of her, that my soul, that is, my affection, longs for the power to utter them with the tongue. And because I cannot tell them, I say

[1] *Conv.*, iii. 11, par. 3, *et seq.*
[2] *Ethics*, viii. 3.
[3] *Conv.*, iii. 8, par. 7.
[4] "All my thoughts speak of love" (*Vita Nuova*, § 13).

that the soul laments, saying, "*Woe is me, who cannot tell again,*" etc.

13. And this is the other ineffable thing; that is, that the tongue is not able to follow the intellect in what it sees.[1] And I say, "*My soul that listens and that feels,*" listening, that is, to the words, and feeling the sweetness of their power.

CHAPTER IV.

1. HAVING discussed the two ineffable parts of my subject, it is proper to speak of the words that describe my inadequacy [to treat this subject]. I say, then, that my inadequacy arises from a double cause, just as my lady's greatness is doubly transcendent, in the way that has been described.[2]

2. For I have been obliged, through *poverty of intellect*, to leave out much that is true of her, and which is, as it were, a ray of light within the mind, that like a transparent body receives, but cannot reflect it.[3] And this I express here: "*And certes it befits that first I leave.*"

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[1] "Because in drawing near to its desire
Our intellect ingulfs itself so far,
That after it the memory cannot go."
(*Par.*, I. 7.)

"Many things are seen by the intellect for which vocal signs are lacking" (*Ep. to Can Grande*, 29).

[2] In the previous chapter.

[3] "Even as water doth receive
A ray of light, remaining still unbroken."
(*Par.*, 2. 35.)

Tasso, in the *Ger. Lib.*, iv. 32, says—

"As when through water or unblemished crystal
Passes a ray, unbroken, undivided."

And Petrarch and others have the same simile.

3. Then when I say, "*And out of that I understand*," I mean that not only am I unequal to that which the intellect cannot grasp, but also to what I understand, because my tongue has not *eloquence* enough to repeat that of which my mind discourses. Wherefore it may be seen that in respect of the truth very little will be said; and that redounds to her great praise (if well considered), which is its principal purpose. And that discourse may be said to have issued with success from the workshop[1] of the rhetorician, every part of which helps out the principal design.

4. Then when I say, "*Therefore, if my poor rhymes are full of faults*," I excuse myself for a fault for which I should not be blamed when others may see that my words are inferior to the dignity of this lady. And I say that if there be defects in my rhymes (that is, in my words) which are appointed to treat of her, the weakness of the intellect and the inadequacy of our speech must be blamed,[2] being overpowered by the thought, so that they cannot entirely follow it, especially where the thought is

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[1] This metaphor of the workshop or forge was a favourite one in the time of Dante, and much used in the schools. See *Par.*, 26. 115—

"He whom I point out,
. . . . .
Was of the mother-tongue a better smith."

[2] "All tongues would for a certainty fall short,
By reason of our speech and of our mind
That have but little room to hold so much."
(*Inf.*, 28. 4.)

"Shorter henceforward will my language fall
Of what I yet remember, than an infant's
Who still his tongue doth moisten at the breast."
(*Par.*, 33. 106.)

born of love, because there more than elsewhere the soul travaileth.[1]

5. Some may say, You accuse and excuse yourself together (for it is a reason for blame and not for excuse, in so far as the blame is laid upon the intellect and the speech, which are mine; because if they are good I should be praised, and if they are defective, I should be blamed). To this I may answer briefly, that I do not accuse, but really do excuse, myself. And it should be known, therefore, that according to the saying of the philosopher, in the third of the *Ethics*, man is worthy of praise or blame only for those things which are in his power to do or not to do;[2] but for those things over which he has no power, he merits neither abuse nor praise; because both belong elsewhere, although the things be part of the man himself. Whence we should not blame a man because he was born with an ugly body, since it was not in his power to make himself beautiful; but we should blame the bad arrangement of the matter of which he is made,[3] which was the cause of this

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[1] The word *ingegnarsi*, to strive or endeavour, here corresponds more exactly to the scriptural expression, "My soul travaileth within me."

[2] *Ethics*, iii. 1, 5.

> "If this were so, in you would be destroyed
> Free-will, nor any justice would there be
> In having joy for good, or grief for evil."
> (*Purg.*, 16. 70.)
>
> "Nature
> In the like manner working as the artist
> Who has the skill of art, and hand that trembles."
> (*Par.*, 13. 76.)

"And when the artist is perfect, and the instrument is good, if an error occur in the form of his art, it can only be attributed to his material" (*De Mon.*, ii. 2).

sin of nature. And so we should not praise a man for the beauty of the body he was born with, because he did not make it; but we should praise the artificer, that is, human nature, who makes such beauty out of her material when she is not hindered by it. And it was a good saying of the priest to the emperor, who was laughing and scoffing at the ugliness of his body,[1] "God is the Lord: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves;" and these are the words of the Prophet in a verse of the Psalter,[2] written word for word as in the priest's answer. And therefore let those wicked miscreants look to it, who put all their study into the adornment of their persons, instead of trying to live decently;[3] because that is simply to ornament the work of another [*i.e.* nature] and to abandon one's own.

6. Returning, therefore, to the subject, I say that our intellect, by defect in that power through which it represents what it sees, that is, imagination[4] (which

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[1] "The Emperor Henry, whose reign began A.D. 1002, hearing a mass said on one occasion by a very deformed priest, was astonished at the sight of a man so exceedingly ugly and so different from other men. But, the priest being truly a man of God, the thought of the emperor was revealed to him, and he said, '*Scitote quoniam Dominus ipse fecit nos, et non ipsi nos*'" (*Hist. varia di M. Ludov. Domenici*, *Vinegia*, 1564).

[2] Ps. c. 3; see also Aristotle, *Ethics*, iii. 5.

[3] Because a person's body is the work of nature, but their life is in their own hands. In *Purg.*, 3. 11, we have the same use of the word *onestade* ("decency")—

"That haste
Which mars the *decency* of every act."

Longfellow translates "dignity," but the Italian authorities give it the wider significance.

[4] In the original, *fantasia* as in *Par.*, 10. 46—

"And if our fantasies too lowly are
For altitude so great, it is no marvel."

In a note to this passage, Scartazzini defines *fantasia* as "that imagi-

is an organic power), cannot rise to certain things (because herein the imagination cannot help it, not having the wherewithal), such as are the Substances[1] separate from matter [*i.e.* the angels], which, if we can consider at all, we can neither conceive nor comprehend perfectly.

7. And man is not to blame for this, this defect not being of his making; on the contrary, it was universal Nature, that is God, who chose to deprive us of this light during this life;[2] whence, as He hath done it, it would be presumptuous to discuss it. Therefore, if my meditation carried me to places where the imagination failed to follow the intellect, if I could not understand, I am not to be blamed. Moreover, there is a limit put to our intelligence in all its operations,[3] not by ourselves, but by universal Nature; and we must know also that the limits of the intelligence are wider in thought than in speech, and wider in speech than in signs. Hence if our thought, not only that which does not come up to the perfect intellect, but also that which ends with it, is too much for our speech, we are not to blame, because we did not make it so. And therefore I really excuse myself when I say, "*Blame my in-*

native power of the soul which can only form images of things perceptible by the senses," which is the precise sense which Dante gives to "imagination."

[1] "Those Substances that evermore rejoice
In the sight of God."
(*Par.*, 29. 76.)

[2] "We see like those who have imperfect sight."
(*Inf.*, 10. 100.)

[3] In *Conv.*, iv. 15, Dante quotes St. Thomas Aquinas as saying, "There are many men so presumptuous in their conceit, that they believe they can compass all things with their intellect."

adequate powers first of all, And then our speech, that hath not force enough To tell again all Love himself hath said." For that good will may be very clearly seen herein, whereby alone human merit should be estimated.[1]

8. And now we have explained the meaning of the first principal part of the canzone now under consideration.

CHAPTER V.

1. WHEN, by the discussion of the first part, the meaning thereof has been made plain, it is proper to go on to the second. Of this, for the sake of clearness, we will make three parts, according to the three parts in which it is divided. For in the first part I praise this lady in general, and for what is common to her soul as well as to her body; in the second, I come down to special praises of her soul; and in the third, to special praises of her body. The first part begins, "*The sun, that daily circleth round the world;*" the second begins, "*That which we read in her sweet countenance;*" and these parts are to be discussed according to their order.

2. I say, then, "*The sun, that daily circleth round the world;*" and here we must know, that we may understand this perfectly, how the world is circled by the sun. And first I would say that by the *world* I do not mean here the whole body of the universe,

[1] "This is the principle from which is taken
Occasion of desert in you, according
As good or evil loves it gathers in."
(*Purg.*, 18. 64.)

but only this division of sea and land; following the common usage, which so designates it. Whence some say, "This man has seen all the world," meaning this division of the sea and land.

3. This world Pythagoras and his followers asserted to be one of the stars, and believed that there was another opposite to it, and exactly corresponding to it; and this he called *Antictona*,[1] and said the two were both contained in one sphere which revolved from east to west, and on account of this revolution the sun was made to circle round us, and was now seen and then not seen. And he said that fire was between these two [stars], asserting that it was a more noble element than water and earth [of which these worlds are composed], and asserting the middle place to be the noblest of those occupied by the four simple bodies [or elements]. And therefore he said that fire, when it appeared to rise,[2] in reality descended to this centre.

4. But Plato was of another opinion, and wrote in one of his books, called *Timæus*, that the earth, with the sea, was actually the centre of all [the universe] but that its circumference revolved round its centre, following the first movement of the heavens; but very slowly, owing to the grossness of its matter, and its exceeding distance[3] from the *Primum Mobile*.

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[1] From the Greek *antichthon*, the antipodes (see Aristotle on *Heaven and Earth*, ii. 13).

[2] "Even as the fire doth upward move
By its own form, which to ascend is born."
(*Purg.*, 18. 28.)

[3] So the moon, being nearest to the earth, is called "the slowest sphere" (*Par.*, 3. 51). Scartazzini says that Dante took this passage from Aristotle's quotation of it in *Heaven and Earth*.

5. These opinions are reproved as false in the second *Of Heaven and Earth*, by that glorious Philosopher[1] to whom Nature has most completely revealed her secrets; and by him it is there proved that this world, that is, our earth, stands still and fixed to all eternity. And the reasons Aristotle gives to controvert these opinions, and to affirm the truth, it is not my intention to relate here; because it is quite enough for those to whom I speak, to know on his great authority that this earth is immovable, and does not revolve, and that, with the sea, it is the centre of the heavens.[2]

6. The heavens revolve continually around this centre, as we see; in which revolution there must necessarily be two fixed poles, and a circle[3] equidistant from them, which revolves with greater velocity. Of these two poles, one is visible to almost all the discovered earth, that is, the north pole; the other is invisible to almost all the discovered earth, that is, the south pole. The circle which extends between these poles, is that part of the heavens traversed by the sun in going through Aries and Libra.[4]

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[1] "The Master of those who know" (*Inf.*, 4. 30), and "the Master of philosophers," and "the Leader of human reason" (*Conv.*, iv. 2 and 8).

[2] "That the centre of the earth is the centre of the universe is acknowledged by all" (*Quest. Aq. et Terr.*, iii.).

[3] "Like those stars, neighbours of the steadfast poles."
(*Par.*, 10. 78.)

"The mid-circle of supernal motion."
(*Purg.*, 4. 79.)

[4] "Which in one art is the Equator called,
And still remains between the Sun and Winter."
(*Purg.*, 4. 80.)

7. Whence we must know, that if a stone were to fall from this our pole, it would fall [far away in the ocean, exactly above the crest of the sea], where, if there were a man, the [polar] star[1] would be always over the middle of his head ; and I believe that from Rome to that place, going directly north, would be a distance of almost two thousand seven hundred miles, or a little more or less. Imagining, then, to make it more clear, that in the place I speak of there were a city called Maria ; I say that if from the other, that is, the south pole, a stone should fall, it would fall above this crest of the ocean (which on this globe[2] is exactly opposite Maria) ; and I believe that from Rome to where this second stone would fall, going directly south, would be a distance of seven thousand five hundred miles, a little more or less. And here let us imagine another city called Lucia ; and the distance, in whatever direction the measure was taken, would be ten thousand two hundred miles between the two, that is, half the circumference of this globe,[3] so that the citizens of Maria have the soles of their feet opposite those of the citizens of Lucia.

8. Let us also imagine a circle on this globe, everywhere equally distant from Maria and from Lucia.

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[1] The original has only "*the star*," which Perticari and Fraticelli take to mean the *sun*, "as frequently used by Dante ;" but I fail to find any such usage. As before noted, he uses "the star" for "the *stars ;*" and in *Par.*, 12. 29, he undoubtedly means the polar star, where he speaks of "the needle turning to *the star.*" Giuliani leaves out the words in brackets as a vicious interpolation.

[2] In illustration of this passage, see *Purg.*, 4. 67–83.

[3] *Conv.*, iv. 8, Dante gives the circumference of the earth as 20,420 miles instead of 20,400.

I believe that this circle[1] (according to what I understand as the meaning of the astrologers, and that of Albertus Magnus,[2] in his books on *The Nature of Places*, and on *The Properties of the Elements*, and also by the testimony of Lucan in his ninth book), would divide the habitable earth from the ocean at the meridian, almost by the whole extent of the first climate,[3] where are found, among other peoples, the Garamantes,[4] who go almost always naked ; to whom

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[1] In the *Question of Earth and Water*, Dante says that the habitable earth extends longitudinally from Cadiz to the shores of the river Ganges.

[2] Albertus Magnus, who is placed by Dante in Paradise with St. Thomas Aquinas, was born in Suabia, of a noble family, in 1193. Educated at Pavia, he became a Dominican about 1223, and some twelve years later taught at Cologne, where St. Thomas was his favourite disciple. In 1254 he was elected Provincial of his Order at Worms, and in 1260 the Pope made him Bishop of Ratisbon. He died at Cologne, November 15, 1280, at the age of eighty-seven. He was one of the most learned men of his time, and was called the "Universal Doctor," on account of his all-embracing knowledge. His writings, in the Lyons edition of 1651, fill twenty-one huge folios, and embrace the whole circle of the religious and theological science of his day. In later days he was called the Ape of Aristotle, having lectured and commented so extensively on the Stagyrite (see Milman, *Hist. Latin Christ.*, viii. 259).

[3] The ancients divided the habitable earth and the heaven above it into *climates*, understanding thereby a *zone* of earth or heaven contained between two circles parallel with the equator. And in the time of Dante it was believed that there were seven terrestrial climates between the equator and the north pole. The length of the day determined the position of each terrestrial climate, each having half an hour more than the preceding one, the seventh having a day of sixteen hours. To the climates of the earth corresponded those of the heavens, the centre of the terrestrial globe being the centre of the universe (Giuliani.) But Albertus Magnus, in the *Nature of Places*, quoted by Dante, gives only *five* climates or zones, "three uninhabitable and two habitable, of which one is called burning or torrid" (*lib. cit.*, i. 5). In the ninth book of the *Pharsalia*, Lucan speaks of "the adjacent waters of the burnt-up zone."

[4] The Garamantes were a powerful Libyan tribe in the interior of Africa, mentioned by Herodotus and Pliny.

came Cato with the people of Rome, when flying from the dominion of Cæsar.

9. Marking these three places upon this globe, it is easy to see how the sun circles round it. I say, then, that the Heaven of the Sun revolves from west to east, not directly against the diurnal movement, that is, of day and night, but obliquely against it;[1] so that its equator (which is exactly between its poles, and wherein is the body of the sun[2]) cuts in two opposite parts the circle of the first two poles;[3] that is, in the beginning of Aries and the beginning of Libra; and is divided from this by two arcs, one towards the north and the other towards the south. The points of which arcs are equally distant from the first circle[4] in every direction, by twenty-three degrees and a little more;[5] and one point is the beginning of Cancer, and the other is the beginning of Capricorn. Whence it follows that in the beginning of Aries, when the sun goes below the meridian of the first poles [*i.e.* the equator], Maria may see this sun circling round the world,[6] low down below the

[1] "The oblique circle which conveys the planets."
(*Par.*, 10. 13.)

The Heaven of the Sun (called in the *Vita Nuova*, § 2, the Heaven of Light) does not revolve in direct opposition to the Primum Mobile, which goes from east to west, but obliquely across its direction.

[2] In the equatorial circle of its own heaven, and at its summit, as it were, is the body of the sun.

[3] Therefore the equator of the Heaven of the Sun cuts across the equator of the Primum Mobile in the beginning of Aries and Libra.

"That part
Where the one motion on the other strikes."
(*Par.*, 10. 8.)

[4] The equator of the Primum Mobile or the zodiac.

[5] The two tropics, whose greatest distance from the equator is 23° 28′.

[6] The *world* is here taken in its most limited sense.

earth, or rather the sea, like a millstone, of which but half the body is seen; and this she may see coming up like the screw of a press,[1] until ninety-one rounds, or a little more, may be counted. When these rounds are completed, his height in relation to Maria is almost as great as when he is for us in the middle of the earth,[2] where the days and nights are equal; and if a man were standing in Maria, with his face constantly turned towards the sun, he would see him set on his right hand. Then, in the same way, he seems to descend for ninety-one rounds and a little more, so that he circles round the earth or the sea without entirely showing himself; and then he is hidden, and Lucia begins to see him; and then sees him ascending and descending as many degrees as were seen by Maria. And if a man were standing in Lucia, and kept his face always turned towards the sun, he would see him set on his left hand.[3] By which we may see that these places have [in some parts][4] one day in the year six months long, and a night of the same length; and when one has the day, another has the night.

10. We must agree, also, that the equatorial circle where the Garamantes are, as has been said, sees the

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[1] (The sun) "along the spirals was revolving,
Where each time earlier he presents himself."

Dante uses the spiral movement of a screw to describe that of the sun, when entering Aries in March it rises earlier every day.

[2] Giuliani here follows the *Cod. Ricc.*; but Fraticelli holds, with Dionisi, that instead of *mezza terra* we should read *mezzo terza*, i.e. 22½ degrees.

[3] "I wondered
That on the left hand we were smitten by it."
(*Purg.*, 4. 56.)

[4] Giuliani proposes to insert the words bracketed, as an equal division of day and night could only take place at the poles.

sun revolving round this globe exactly above it, not like a screw, but like a millstone,[1] half of which only can be seen when he goes below Aries. And then he is seen leaving it [the equator] and going towards Maria for ninety-one days and a little more, and returning again for the same number; and then, when he has turned, he goes below Libra, and then departs and goes towards Lucia ninety-one days and a little more, returning in the same time. And this place [*i.e.* the equator], which completely encircles the globe, always has the days equal to the nights, whichever way the sun goes, and twice a year has an extremely hot summer, and two slight winters. And also the two spaces that are between the two imaginary cities and the equator, see the sun differently, according as they are near or remote from these [cities]; as may be now seen, by means of what has been said, by any one of noble understanding, to which it is well to add a little labour. Whence we may now see that by Divine Providence the world is so ordered, that when the sphere of the sun has returned in its revolution to the same point, this globe, where we are, has received in every part thereof as much light as darkness. O ineffable Wisdom, that hast ordered thus![2]

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[1] "Thus I beheld the glorious wheel move round."
(*Par.*, 10. 145.)
"Began the holy millstone to revolve."
(*Par.*, 12. 3.)
"Begin to contemplate with joy
The Master's art."
(*Par.*, 10. 10.)
"The heavens are calling you, and wheel around you,
Displaying to you their eternal beauties."
(*Purg.*, 14. 148.)

"Omnis naturæ species et motus quasi quadam varietate linguarum

how poorly our minds can comprehend Thee! And ye, for whose use and pleasure I write,[1] in what blindness ye live, never raising your eyes towards these things, but keeping them fixed upon the mud[2] of your stupidity!

CHAPTER VI.

1. IN the preceding chapter we have shown how the sun revolves, so that now we can proceed to explain the meaning of that part [of the canzone] where this is mentioned. I say, then, that in this part I first begin to praise this lady by comparing her with other things. And I say that the sun, wandering round the world, sees nothing so noble as she; whence it follows, according to these words, that she is the noblest of all the things that the sun shines upon.[3] And I say, "*in that hour*," etc. Where we must observe that *hour* is understood by the astrologers in two ways.[4] One is, that the day and the night make twenty-four hours; that is, twelve for the day and twelve for the night, whether the days be long or

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clamat atque increpat agnoscendum esse Creatorum" (St. Augustine, *De Lib. Arb.*, iii. 23).

[1] "Respicite Cœli spatium, firmitudinem, celeritatem, et aliquando desinite vilia mirare" (Boëthius, *De Cons. Phil.*, ii. 8).

[2] See the punishment of the slothful (*Inf.*, 7. 121)—

> "Fixed in the mire they say: We sullen were
> In the sweet air which by the sun is gladdened,
> Being filled within with smoke of sluggishness."

[3] Here I have translated *gentile* and *gentilissima* by "noble" and "noblest," because our word "gentle" has lost so much of its primitive force.

[4] Dante follows here the system of Alfergano, *Ob. Cron. et Ast.*, c. 14 (see also *Conv.*, iv. 23).

short. And these hours are made longer or shorter by day and by night, according to the way the day and night lengthen or shorten. And these hours are used by the Church, when she speaks of the first, third, sixth, and ninth [hours]; and so they are called *temporal* hours.[1] The other method is, that, allowing twenty-four hours for a day and night, the day has sometimes fifteen hours and the night nine; and sometimes the night has sixteen and the day eight, according as the days and nights lengthen and shorten; and these are called equal hours. And at the equinox these hours and those called *temporal* are the same, because, the day being then equal [in length] to the night, this necessarily follows.

2. Then when I say, "*All the celestial powers gaze on her*," I praise her without respect to anything else. And I say that the Intelligences of heaven gaze upon her, and that all noble souls[2] here below think of her, the more they have of that which delights them [*i.e.* her peace]. And here we must know that every Intelligence on high (according to what is written in the book *Of Causes*) knows what is above itself and what is below, and therefore recognizes God as its Cause, and what is below itself as its effect. And because God is the universal Cause of all things, knowing Him, all things know themselves,[3] according to the nature of their intelligence; therefore all the

[1] The Church divides the day into four parts, each comprising three of these temporal hours, according to which division the daily offices are arranged (*Conv.*, iv. 23, par. 8).

[2] Her lovers. "Love and the noble heart are but one thing" (*Vita Nuova*, § 20).

[3] Beholding themselves in that mirror "wherein all things see themselves depicted" (*Par.*, 24. 42).

Intelligences know the human form[1] in so far as it is determined in the Divine Mind.[2] More than all do the Motive Powers know it, because they are its most especial cause, as well as of all general forms; and they know this, the most perfect form, to be as far as possible their rule and pattern.[3] And if this human form, copied and individualized, be not perfect, it is from no defect in this example, but in the matter of which the individual is made.[4] Therefore when I say, "*All the celestial powers gaze on her*," I wish to say no less than that she is made as the express example of the human essence as it exists in the Divine Mind; and [is so made] by that virtue which belongs above all to those angelic minds that, in conjunction with the heavens, form things here below.[5]

3. And to confirm this I add, "*And all her faithful lovers here below*;" where we must understand that everything desires above all its own perfection;[6] and in this finds every desire satisfied, and for this [end] all things are desired. And this is the desire which

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[1] "The soul is the substantial form of man" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.*, quæst. 76, art. iii.).

[2] "That which can die, and that which dieth not,
Are nothing but the splendour of the idea
Which by His love our Lord brings into being."
(*Par.*, 13. 52.)

[3] That ideal of humanity which they behold in the Divine Mind. "Nature exists in the mind of the Primal Motor, which is God; then in the heavens, as in an instrument by means of which the similitude of eternal goodness is impressed upon inferior matter" (*De Mon.*, ii. 2).

[4] "The ideal signet more or less shines through."
(*Par.*, 13. 69.)

[5] "The power and motion of the holy spheres,
As from the smith doth come the hammer's craft,
Forth from the blessed motors must proceed."
(*Par.*, 2. 127.)

[6] *Conv.*, i. 1, par. 1.

ever makes all desires seem incomplete; for no pleasure of this life is great enough to so take away the thirst of our soul,[1] that this desire just spoken of shall not remain in the mind. And because this lady is truly that perfect thing, I say that those who receive most delight here below, when they are most at peace find her within their thoughts. For this reason I say that she is as perfect as the human essence in its highest degree can be.

4. Then when I say, "*And he who gives her, taketh such delight In her sweet being,*" I show that not only is this lady most perfect as regards human nature, but more than most perfect in that she receives more from the Divine goodness than is the due of humanity. Whence we may reasonably believe, that as every master loves his best work most, so God loves the best human being more than all the others. And inasmuch as His bounty is not restricted by any limit, His love takes no account of what is due to him who receives, but exceeds this in giving, and in the blessing of His power and His grace. Wherefore I say here, that God, who giveth her being, for love of her perfection has endowed her with His holiness beyond the limits of what is due to our nature.

5. Then when I say, "*That pure spirit of hers,*"

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[1] "The concreated and perpetual thirst."
(*Par.*, 2. 19.)

"That thirst of nature that is never quenched."
(*Purg.*, 21. 1.)

"The food
That while it satisfies, inspires more hunger."
(*Purg.*, 31. 128.)

Wisdom says in Ecclesiasticus, "They that eat me shall yet be hungry, and they that drink me shall yet be thirsty;" and see John iv. 13–15.

I prove what has been said by the testimony of sense.[1] For we must know that (as the Philosopher says, in the second of *The Soul*) the soul is the act of the body;[2] and if its act, then its cause; and because, as is written in the book before quoted, *Of Causes*, every cause informs its effect with the goodness it has received from its own cause, which is God. Wherefore, as we see in her, as regards her body, such wonderful things as make every beholder desirous to see them, it is evident that her form,[3] that is, her soul (which governs it [the body],[4] as being its proper cause), receives in a miraculous manner the gracious goodness of God.

6. And thus it is proved by this vision [of her beauty] which is beyond all claim of our nature, and which in her is most perfect, as has been said above, that this lady is endowed by God, and by Him made noble. And this is the whole of the literal meaning of the first division of the second principal part.

CHAPTER VII.

1. HAVING praised this lady generally, in respect to both her body and her soul, I will proceed to praise her especially in respect to her soul. And first I will

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[1] Her beauty being perceptible by the sight.

[2] *Act* is here used in the sense of the active principle, it seems to me, in the scholastic sense of the actual as distinguished from the potential; being the informing principle, as Dante goes on to say, it is the *cause* of the body.

[3] See note 2, par. 2, of this chapter.

[4] "So may the soul for a long while conduct
Those limbs of thine."

(*Inf.*, 16. 64.)

praise her goodness as great in itself, and then as great in others and useful to the world. And I begin this second part when I say, "*Of her it may be said.*"

2. Therefore I say first, "*And power Divine descends to dwell in her.*" And here we must know that the Divine goodness descends upon all things,[1] otherwise they could not exist; but although this goodness springs from that Principle[2] which is most simple, it is received in divers ways, and in greater or less degree according to the virtue of the recipients.[3] Whence it is written in the book *Of Causes*, "The Primal Goodness sendeth His bounties unto all things in an affluence."[4] None the less does each thing receive of this affluence according to the manner of its power and its being. And of this we have a visible example in the sun. We see that the light of

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[1] "From that ineffable and infinite Good
That dwells on high, floweth unceasing love,
As come the sunbeams to a shining body."
(*Purg.*, 15. 67.)

[2] That is, there is no difference in the Divine goodness; only in those who receive it.

[3] "The glory of Him who moveth everything
Doth penetrate the universe, and shine
In one part more, and in another less."
(*Par.*, 1. 1.)

"The simplest of all substances, which is God, who is more apparent in man than in the beasts and the plants, more in these than in the minerals, and in these more than in fire, and more in fire than earth" (*Vulg. El.*, i. 16).

[4] *Discorrimento* (from the Latin *discurrere*) is used by Dante precisely in the sense of the Gnostic *dynameis*, as in *Par.*, 29. 21, "The moving of the Lord upon the waters" (Gen. i. 2). According to the Aristotleian doctrines, says Scartazzini, God is called the Primal Motor, and according to the theory of emanation the Light which fills the universe, and is received most perfectly by the heavens. "*Deus in creaturis mirabilis, in hominus amabilis, in angelis desiderabilis, in se ipso incomprehensibilis, in reprobis intolerabilis, item in damnatis ut terror et orror*" (St. Bernard, *Medit.*, i.).

the sun, which is single and derived from one source, is received in divers ways by divers bodies,[1] as Albertus Magnus says in his book *On the Intellect.* For certain bodies, because of the exceeding brightness of their transparency, as soon as the sun strikes them become so luminous that, by the multiplying in them of his light, their aspect can hardly be discerned, and they give forth great splendour to other objects; and such are gold[2] and some [precious] stones. There are certain others, that being entirely transparent, not only receive the light, but do not impede it; on the contrary, transmit it, tinged with their own colour, to other things. And certain others have such transcendent clearness, that they become so radiant as to overpower the harmony [*i.e.* adjustability] of the eye, and cannot be looked at without fatiguing the sight;[3] and such are mirrors. Certain others are so lacking in transparency, that they receive almost no light, like the earth.

3. Thus the goodness of God is received in one

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[1] "O Love, that draweth all thy power from heaven,
As the bright sun its splendour,
That doth the more display its sovereign power
The more its rays light upon noble things!"
(Canzone 12, Ed. Frat., p. 171.)

"Flashed
As in the sunshine doth a golden mirror."
(*Par.* 17. 122.)

"Appeared a little ruby each, wherein
Ray of the sun was burning."
(*Par.*, 19. 4.)

"More radiant he appeared,
So that near by the eye could not endure him."
(*Purg.*, 2. 38.)

This passage is translated almost word for word from the *De Intellectu et Intelligibili* of Albertus Magnus (lib. i. tr. 3, ch. 2); and see quotation from *De Vulg. El.*, note 3, par. 2, of this chapter.

manner by the Substances separate [from matter], that is, the Angels (who are without material grossness, and almost transparent by the purity of their form); and in other wise by the human soul, which although on the one side it is free from matter, on the other is impeded by it (like a man who is all in the water except his head, of whom it cannot be said that he is wholly in the water or wholly out of it); and in other wise by the animals, whose soul is entirely bound up in matter, but somewhat ennobled by God; and in other wise by minerals; and by the earth in a different manner from the other elements; because it is most material, and therefore most remote, and most out of proportion with that primal, simplest, and noblest Power which is pure intellect, that is, God.[1]

4. And although we make here a general classification,[2] nevertheless we may make also a more particular one—that one human soul receives this [Divine power] differently from another. And because in the intellectual order of the universe there is an ascent and descent by almost continuous steps from the lowest to the highest, and from the highest to the lowest (as we see in the physical order[3]); and between the angelic nature, which is intellectual, and the human soul, there is no step at all, but they are, as it were, on one continuous grade; so between the human soul

[1] "If in perfection tempered were the wax,
And were the heaven in its supremest virtue,
The brilliance of the seal would all appear."
(*Par.*, 13. 73.)

[2] As to the relative capacity of receiving the Divine goodness.

[3] "In the order that I speak of are inclined
All natures by their destinies diverse,
More or less near unto their origin."
(*Par.*, 1. 110.)

and the most perfect soul belonging to the brutes there is again no interval; and as we see many men so vile and of such low nature that they seem hardly other than beasts, therefore we must also assert and firmly believe that there are men so noble and of so lofty a nature, that they are scarcely other than angels, otherwise humanity would not extend in both directions [through this scale], which could not be. Such as these [last], Aristotle, in the seventh of the *Ethics*, calls divine;[1] and of such, I say, is this lady, so that the Divine power, in the same way that it descends upon the angel,[2] descends upon her.

5. Then when I say, "*And let the lady fair who doubts my word*," I prove this by the experience we may have of her in those operations that properly belong to the rational soul, wherein the Divine light shines more directly, that is, in the words and acts which we are wont to call conduct and behaviour. Whence we must know that only man, of all the animals, can speak,[3] and has conduct and actions which may be called rational, because he alone of himself possesses reason. And if any would say, in contradiction, that some birds speak (which certainly seems to be true, especially of magpies and parrots), and that some animals have certain actions or rules of conduct, such as monkeys and others, I answer that it is not true

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[1] "A virtue which is above human nature—a sort of heroic and divine virtue" (*Ethics*, i. 1).

[2] "The angel that beholds His face."
(Canzone 2, ver. 3.)

[3] "Among all existing things, to man alone has been given the faculty of speech, being necessary alone to him. Certainly it is not necessary to the angels, nor to the inferior animals, and therefore would have been given them in vain" (*De Vulg. El.*, i. 2).

that they speak, or that they have rules of conduct, because they do not possess reason, from which these must proceed. Nor is there in them the principle of these actions, nor do they recognize what that is, nor do they mean anything by these actions, but only represent what they see or smell, as the image of things is reflected in any polished body. Whence, as in the mirror the corporal image that it shows is not real, so the image [or reflection] of reason, that is, the words and acts that the brute soul represents, or rather displays, is not real.[1]

6. I say that "*the lady fair*" who does not believe what I say should "*Go where she goes, and study all her ways*" (I do not say that *man*, because this experience can be more decorously acquired by women than by men); and I tell what she [*i.e.* "that lady fair"] will hear, being with her, saying what her speech doth, and what her actions. Because her speech, by its loftiness and sweetness, inspires in the mind of him who hears it a thought of love, which I call "*a spirit from heaven*," because its beginning was from above, and from above its source, as has been already told. From which thought comes the firm conviction that this is a lady of miraculous power; and her actions, by their sweetness and discretion, awaken love, and cause it to be felt wherever kindly nature has implanted the capacity to love.[2] Which

[1] As the image in a glass is not real, neither is the *appearance* of reason reflected in the words and acts of animals.

"Esteeming them as mirrored semblances."
(*Par.*, 3. 20.)

[2] "Evermore nature, if it fortune find
Discordant to it, like all other seed
Out of its proper place, hath ill success."
(*Par.*, 8. 139.)

work of nature goes on as is described in the next Book.

7. Then when I say, "*Of her it may be said,*" etc., I mean to relate how the goodness and power of her soul is good and useful to others; and first how she is useful to other women, when I say, "*Noble is that In every lady found, that's found in her;*" where I set forth an evident example to all women, which, gazing upon, they may ennoble themselves by following.

8. Secondly, I narrate how useful she is to all people, saying how her aspect aids our faith, which more than all other things is useful to humanity, as that by which we escape from eternal death, and gain eternal life. And she strengthens our faith, because the very foundation of our faith is in the miracles [1] done by Him who was crucified [2] (who created our reason and willed it to be less than His power [3]), and [in those] done afterwards by His saints in His name; and many are so obstinate that, through some mist [4] [obscuring their sight], they are doubtful of these miracles, nor can they believe in any miracle without

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[1] "It is the will of God that miracles should contribute to its (the empire's) perfection. And that this is true, we see by what St. Thomas says in the third of *Against the Gentiles:* 'A miracle is a thing which, by the Divine will, happens out of the common order of things" (*De Mon.*, ii. 4).

[2] "O Jove Supreme!
Who upon earth for us wast crucified!"
(*Purg.*, 6. 119.)

[3] "He . . .
Could not the impress of His power so make
On all the universe, as that His Word
Should not remain in infinite excess."
(*Par.*, 19. 43.)

[4] "The psalm *Delectasti* giveth light
Which has the power to uncloud your intellect."
(*Purg.*, 28. 80.)

some visible experience of it; and this lady being visibly a miraculous thing, of whom the eyes of men may have daily experience (thus making possible for us all other miracles), it is evident that this lady with her wondrous aspect strengthens our faith. And therefore I say finally, "*As was from all eternity ordained*" (that is, everlastingly ordered) in the mind of God, in testimony of the faith to those living at the present time. And thus ends the second part of the second principal division, according to the literal meaning.

Chapter VIII.

1. Of all the works of Divine wisdom, man is the most wonderful, considering how Divine power has united three natures under one form;[1] and how subtly harmonized must his body be with that form, having organs to correspond with almost all its powers.[2] Wherefore, on account of the great concord

[1] The vegetative, the animal (or sensitive), and the intellectual soul. "Form" is used here in the scholastic sense.

> "And this against that error is, which thinks
> One soul above another kindles in us."
>
> (*Purg.*, 4. 6.)

[2] Except that part of the intellect, says Giuliani, "that the heavens have not in charge" (*Purg.*, 16. 81). And in *Purg.*, 25. 64, we read of Averroës, that

> "He erred, that in his doctrine separate
> He made the soul from possible intellect,
> For he no organ saw by this assumed."

By *possible intellect*, says Scartazzini, Dante, as well as all the scholiasts, understood a universal intelligence which communicated itself to the soul without making part of it, and without being confined to any special organ of the body. In the passage from *Purg.*, 25, above quoted, Statius refutes the idea of Averroës that the *possible intellect* is a separate and invariable principle.

that must prevail among so many organs to produce a perfect response, there are very few perfect men out of all their great number. And if so wonderful is this creature,[1] certainly it is not only in words that one fears to treat of its qualities, but also in thought, according to the words of Ecclesiasticus, "The Wisdom of God, which precedeth all things, who can find out?"[2] and these others, "Seek not out the things that are too hard for thee, neither search the things that are above thy strength. But what is commanded thee by God, think upon always; and furthermore, in His works be thou not curious."[3] I, then, who in this third part mean to speak of some of the qualities of such a creature (in so far as in her body its visible beauty is made apparent by the goodness of her soul[4]) with apprehension and not with certainty, intend to begin to loosen, if not completely, at least partially, this very intricate knot.

2. I say, then, that, having explained the sentence of that part in which this lady is praised as regards her soul, we must proceed, and see how, when I say, "*That which we read in her sweet countenance,*" I praise her as regards her body. And I say that in her countenance appear things which "*speak to us of the joys of Paradise.*" The most noble [of all joys], and that which is written as the end of all the others, is to be content,[5] and this to be blest; and this pleasure

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[1] "Humble and high above all other creature." (*Par.*, 33. 2.)

[2] Ecclus. i. 3.

[3] Ibid. iii. 21–23.

[4] See *Conv.*, iii. 6, par. 5, where Dante speaks of the soul as the *effective cause* of the body.

[5] Having satisfied the highest desires of the soul (see *Conv.*, iii. 15, par. 2).

truly lies in her aspect, because, in looking upon her, people find content, so sweetly does her beauty feed the eyes of its beholders! But not as in Paradise, because the contentment which is there perpetual cannot to any [here] be such.[1]

3. And because some may have asked where this wonderful delight appears in her, I distinguish two points in her person, wherein also human beauty and ugliness are most apparent.[2] Wherefore we must know that in whatever part [of the body] the soul is most active, that is she most determined to adorn, and therein more subtly works. Whence we see that in the face of man, where she [the soul] shows her workmanship more than in any other outward part, she works so subtly, that by reason of that subtlety, and as far as her material will permit, no face resembles another; because the final power of matter, which is in all things somewhat dissimilar, here becomes active.[3] And because in the face, and above all in two places, the soul acts (for in these two places all the three natures of the soul have some jurisdiction), that is, in the eyes[4] and the mouth, therefore she adorns these above the rest, and here shows her

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[1] That is, all felicity in this world suffers interruption, whereas in Paradise it is perpetual. "The end of philosophy is that most excellent delight which suffers no *intermission* nor defect; that is, true felicity" (*Conv.*, iii. 11, par. 3, and 13, par. 3).

[2] Here Dante makes a very significant distinction between the beauty of this lady and *human* beauty.

[3] That is, the differentiating potency of matter here becomes active, forming the diversity in human faces.

[4] "Into mine eyes, where most expression dwells."
(*Purg.*, 21. 111.)

"If I may trust to looks,
Which the heart's witnesses are wont to be."
(*Purg.*, 28. 44.)

intention to make the whole beautiful if she may. And in these two places I declare that these pleasures appear: "*In those dear eyes, I say, and that sweet smile.*"[1] Which two places, by a beautiful simile, may be called the balconies of the lady who inhabits the edifice of the body, and who is the soul, because here, although as it were veiled, she often shows herself.

4. She shows herself in the *eyes* so plainly, that her prevailing passion may be seen there by whosoever looks at them attentively. Whence, as six passions are proper to the human soul, which the Philosopher

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[1] "And she began, lighting me with a smile
Such as would make one happy in the fire."
(*Par.*, 7. 17.)

"The *eyes* of Wisdom are her demonstrations, and her *smile* is her persuasions" (*Conv.*, iii. 15). In the *Vita Nuova* Dante sees the *eyes* and *smile* of Beatrice before he hears her voice. In his comments on § 19 and § 21 he says, "And that every vicious thought may be removed here, let whoso reads remember that it is written above that the salute of this lady, which was an act of her mouth (*i.e.* her smile), was the goal of my desires, while I could receive it." And again, "I say how this lady brings this power (love) into action by those most noble features, her eyes, . . . and that most noble feature, her mouth. . . . Here I speak of two acts of her mouth, one of which is her most sweet speech, and the other her marvellous smile." So in the *Divina Commedia* Beatrice directs her eyes to him before she speaks (*Purg.*, 30); and in *Purg.*, 31. 136, the Theological Virtues sing to her—

"Do us the grace that thou unveil
Thy face to him, that so he may discern
The *second beauty* which thou dost conceal."

In *The Influence of the Anti-papal Spirit before the Reformation*, Rossetti says that the two mystic operations of the sectarian (or heretical) initiation were *purification* and *manifestation*. The former, embracing forgetfulness of evil and knowledge of good, was performed by a double baptism (as in Lethe and Eunoe, *Purg.*, 31. 100, and 33. 142). The latter (*manifestation*), the impression on the memory of the new knowledge, was performed in two ways: first, by showing the sacred symbols to the neophyte; second, by explaining their meaning to him. These processes, ocular inspection and oral instruction, were called the *eyes* and *mouth* (or smile) of Madonna, and constituted her *first* and *second beauty*.

mentions in his *Rhetoric*, that is, grace, zeal, mercy, envy, love, and shame, the soul can entertain no one of these passions without its semblance appearing at the windows of the eyes, unless by great force it is shut up within.[1] Whence, indeed, some have put out their eyes, that the inward shame might not appear outwardly, as Statius the poet relates of the Theban Œdipus, when he says that "in eternal night he hid his damnèd shame."[2]

5. The soul reveals herself in the *mouth*, as it were like colour through a glass. And what is laughter but the coruscation of the soul's delight, that is, the visible outward light of that which exists within?[3] And therefore it becomes man to reveal his soul with measured cheerfulness, and to laugh moderately, with a decorous severity, and with little movement of the limbs; so that the lady who reveals herself, as has been said, shall appear modest and not dissolute.

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[1] Compare Dante's description of his pallor arising from fear (*Inf.*, 9. 1—

"That hue which cowardice brought out on me."

[2] "Merserat æterna damnatum nocte pudorem Œdipodes" (*Theb.*, i. 47).

[3] "Till the delight eternal that direct
Shone forth in Beatrice from her fair face,
Contented me with its reflected aspect,
Conquering me with the radiance of a smile.
She said to me, 'Turn thee about and listen;
Not in mine eyes alone is Paradise.'"

(*Par.*, 18. 16.)

The word translated "reflected" is *secondo* (second or secondary), and I think, with Daniello, that it refers to the *second beauty* of Beatrice; and it is strange that, as Dante goes on to mention her *smile*, the commentators have failed to see the antithesis involved in the last line quoted, "Not in mine *eyes* alone is Paradise"—listen also to the demonstrations of my mouth" (see note 4 to par. 3). Dante is quite capable of using the word *secondo* in the double sense of "second" and "reflected."

Wherefore we are thus commanded in the book of the *Four Cardinal Virtues*,[1] "Let thy laughter be without cachinnation; that is, without cackling like a hen." Ah! wonderful laughter of that lady of mine, of which I speak, that can never be perceived but by the eye![2]

6. And I say that Love brings these things to her as to his home; wherein Love may be considered in a double sense. First, the Love of the soul, peculiar to these places; and secondly, universal Love, which inclines things to love and be loved, and ordains the soul to embellish these parts.[3]

7. Then, when I say, "Their brightness overcomes our intellect," I excuse myself for saying little of such exceeding beauty, it being overpowering; and I explain my saying so little by two reasons. One is, that the things which appear in her countenance overpower our intellect; and I say how this is effected—that it is as the sun, which dazzles a weak sight, but not a strong and healthy one.[4] The other is, that one cannot look fixedly upon her countenance,

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[1] The Milanese Editors say that this book, formerly attributed to Seneca, was written by St. Martin, Bishop of Braga, called Martin *Dumense*, from the monastery he founded at Duma, near Braga.

[2] "These words incited Statius at first
To laugh a little."
(*Purg.*, 22. 25.)

"A *little*, as becomes a wise man," says Scartazzini; and quotes Ecclus. xxi. 20, "A fool lifteth up his voice with laughter; but a wise man doth scarce smile a little."

[3] The eyes and mouth.

[4] "And as the sun dazzles a trembling sight,
Even so the memory of that sweet smile
My mind depriveth of its very self."
(*Par.*, 30. 25.)

And in the *Vita Nuova*, § 42, Dante says, "Our intellect is towards those blessed souls like our eyes, weak against the sun."

because thereby the soul becomes intoxicated, so that immediately after gazing upon it she goes astray in all her actions.[1]

8. Then when I say, "Her beauty raineth little flames of fire," I return to the description of its effect, since to treat of it completely is not possible. Because we must know that of all things which so overcome our intellect that we cannot see what they are, it is most fitting to treat by their effects.[2] Whence by treating in this manner of God, and of His Substances separate [from matter, *i.e.* the Angels [3]], and of primitive matter, we may gain some knowledge of them. And therefore I say that the beauty of this lady *rains little flames of fire*, that is, a fervour of love and charity, "*Full of a spirit that inspires love*," that is, Love informed by a noble spirit, which is righteous desire, by which and of which is born the origin of all good thoughts. And not only does it do this, but undoes and destroys the contrary spirit, that is, those innate vices which are above all the enemies of good thoughts.

9. And here be it known that there are certain vices in man to which he is naturally disposed; as certain men from a choleric temperament are disposed

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[1] "From that time forward, what I saw was greater
Than any speech, that yields to such a vision,
And memory faileth, left so far behind."
(*Par.*, 33. 55.)

[2] See *Conv.* iii. 12; iv. 10, 16, 22.

[3] "Substances separate from matter, that is, the Intelligences, whom the common people call angels" (*Conv.*, ii. 5, par. 1).

"Matter and form unmingled and conjoined
Came into being that had no defect,
E'en as three arrows from a three-stringed bow."
(*Par.*, 29. 22.)

to anger; and such vices as these are innate, that is, natural. Others are vices of habit, for which not the temperament, but a habit, is to blame; such as intemperance, above all, in the use of wine. And these vices are conquered and put to flight by good habits, and man's virtue becomes, by the force of habit, without effort in its operation,[1] as the Philosopher says in the second of the *Ethics*. However, there is this difference between the natural and the habitual passions, that the latter, by dint of good habits, disappear entirely, because their very origin (in bad habits) is destroyed by its opposite; but the vices of nature (whose origin is in the temperament of the impassioned), although many, through good habits, make them weaker, still are not entirely destroyed, at least, as regards the first impulse."[2] But they are entirely eradicated as regards their duration, because habit is equal to nature, in which these vices have their source.[3] And, therefore, that man is more praiseworthy who, having an evil nature, controls and

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[1] That is, virtue becomes spontaneous and natural to him. In the *Ethics*, ii. 1, Aristotle says that men become virtuous through the constant performance of virtuous actions, that is, by the force of habit; showing plainly that *operation*, and not *moderation*, as some texts have it, is the correct reading here. We find the same idea in *Purg.*, 4, where the mount is described as being easier to climb as one goes on; and in *Par.*, 18. 58, Dante says—

> "A man in doing good from day to day
> Becomes aware his virtue is increasing."

[2] "The heavens your movements do initiate."
(*Purg.*, 16. 73.)

[3] "Quod consuetum est, veluti innatum est, quia consuetudo est similis naturæ" (Aristotle, *Rhet.*, i. 2). "Difficile est resistere consuetudini, quia assimilatur naturæ. . . . Consuetudo est altera natura (*Ethics*, vii. 10). "Consuetudo quasi affabricata natura dicitur" (St. Augustine, *Musica*, vi.).

governs himself in opposition to the impulse of that nature, than he who, having a good disposition, leads a good life, and should he go astray, returns to the right; as it is more praiseworthy to manage a bad horse than one that is not vicious.

10. I say, then, that these flames that rain from her beauty, as has been said, destroy the innate, that is, the natural vices, that it may be understood that her beauty has the power to renew the nature of those who look upon it, which is a miraculous thing. And this confirms what has been said before in the other chapter, where I say that she is an aid to our faith.

11. Finally, when I say, "*If a lady hear her beauty blamed,*" I intimate, under cover of admonishing other ladies, the end for which so much beauty was made. And I say, that that lady who hears her beauty blamed for some defect, should look at this most perfect example, which is intended not only to improve the good, but also to make a good thing out of an evil.

12. And I add in conclusion, "*She was the thought of Him who moves the worlds,*" that is, God, that it may be understood that through the Divine purpose nature produced such a result. And here ends all the second principal part of this canzone.

Chapter IX.

1. The order of the present book demands that (having first discussed the two parts of this canzone according to my intention) we should proceed to the third, in which I intend to clear the canzone of a

reproach that might be adverse to it.[1] And it is this —that before I came to compose it, this lady appearing to me to bear a somewhat cruel and haughty demeanour towards me, I wrote a little *Ballata*,[2] in which I called this lady proud and pitiless, which seems opposed to what we have just said of her. And, therefore, I turn to the canzone, and under colour of teaching it how to excuse itself, I excuse that other [poem]. And this is a figure, this speaking to inanimate things, which is called by the rhetoricians *prosopopœia*, and the poets use it very often.

2. "*Canzone mine, methinks in contrariwise Thou speakest*," etc. The meaning of this [third part] it is best for me to divide into three parts, in order that it may be more easily understood. First is stated that for which an excuse is necessary [*i.e.* the accusation]; then we proceed to the excuse itself, when I say, "*Thou knowest the sky*," etc.; finally, I speak to the canzone, as to a person instructed as to what has to be done, when I say, "*And thus excuse thyself, if need there be.*"

3. I say first, then, O *Canzone*, who speakest of this Lady with such praise, it seems that thou art adverse to one of thy sisters. I say *sister* as a similitude, because as a woman born of the same father is called a sister, so a man may call *sister* a work produced by the same author;[3] because our work is, in a certain

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[1] The reproach of obscurity (see *Conv.*, iii. 1).

[2] The one beginning "Ye who do know how to discourse of love" (Ballata 10, Ed. Frat., of the *Canzoniere*, see p. 130).

[3] In Sonnet 20 (Ed. Frat.) Dante uses the expression "our brother" in the same sense, and in Sonnet 34 he calls his former verses "your elder sisters."

sense, begotten. And I tell why it seems adverse to the other, by saying—thou makest out this one to be humble, and the other haughty, that is, cruel and disdainful, which is equivalent to it.

4. Having stated the accusation, I go on to the excuse by an example, wherein I show that the truth sometimes differs from the appearance, and that both may be true in certain aspects. I say, "*Thou knowest the sky is ever bright and clear,*" that is, it is always clear, but for some reasons we may be sometimes allowed to call it cloudy. For here we must know it is properly light and colour that are visible, as Aristotle says in the second *Of the Soul*,[1] and in the book *On Sense and Sensation.* Certainly other things are visible, but are not properly [so-called] because they are perceived by other senses, so that they cannot be called properly *visible* or *tangible;* and such are form, size, number, motion, and rest; which things, being perceived by several senses, we call common objects of sense.[2] But colour and light are properly *visible*, because only comprehended by the sight. These visible things, whether perceived by one sense or by all, in as far as they are visible, enter our eyes (I do not mean the things

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[1] *De Anima*, ii. 6, "Sensibile igitur triforiam dividitur. . . . Atque proprium id sensibile dico, quod alio sensu sentiri non potest. . . . Communia vero sunt hæc, motus, quies, numerus, figura et magnitudo. Talia namque nullius sunt propria sensus, sed omnibus communia sunt."

[2] "The *common object*, that the sense deceives."
(*Purg.*, 29. 49.)
The *common object* of sense is that which different things perceptible by more than one sense may have in common; the *particular object* that perceptible by one sense alone, which distinguishes that thing from others.

themselves, but their forms) by the diaphanous medium, not actually, but as an image, almost as in transparent glass.[1] And in the humour that is in the pupil of the eye, this influx (which by its means makes form visible) terminates, because this humour is backed up almost like a mirror, which is glass backed with lead;[2] so that this [image] can go no further, but stops here, like a spent ball. So that form, which does not show in a transparent medium, here becomes visible;[3] and this is why an image appears in leaded glass, and not in any other. From the pupil, the spirit of vision[4] (which goes from thence to the front part of the brain, where the sentient power is, as in its source) instantly, and without lapse of time, represents it [the image] there, and thus we see. Wherefore, that this vision should be true, that is, exactly like the thing seen, it is necessary that the medium through which the image reaches the eye should be without colour, and also the humour of the pupil; otherwise the visible image

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[1] "Such as through polished and transparent glass,
Or waters crystalline and undisturbed."
(*Par.*, 3. 10.)

The Italian word I have translated here "as an image" is *intenzionalmente*, which Giuliani interprets as above; but Fraticelli and the Milanese Editors say it means according to its being in the *intention* of the Creator. "Intention" in the scholastic language signifying the image or resemblance of a thing (*Varchi*), it seems to me the simpler and better sense.

[2] "If I were made of leaded glass,
Thine outward image I should not attract
Sooner to me than I imprint the inner."
(*Inf.*, 23. 25.)

[3] Literally, "shines where it stops." "As in water face answered to face" (Prov. xxviii. 18).

[4] "Speaking especially to the spirit of vision" (*Vita Nuova*, § 2).

will be tinged with the colour of the medium and with that of the pupil. And therefore those who wish to make things appear of some particular colour in a mirror, interpose that colour between the glass and the lead, so that the glass remains filled with it. Plato and other philosophers said, however, that our sight did not consist in the *visible* entering the eye, but in the *power of sight* going forth to the visible. And this opinion is reproved as false by the Philosopher in his book on *Sense and Sensation.*

5. Considering that this is our mode of seeing, it will be readily observed that even though the stars[1] be always bright and shining, and have no change except that of local movement (as is proved in the book *Of Heaven and Earth*), they may from many causes appear to be neither bright nor shining, because of their medium [the atmosphere], which changes continually. This medium has much or little light according to the presence or absence of the sun; and in the presence of the sun, the medium (which is transparent) is so full of light that it overpowers the stars, and therefore they seem no longer brilliant. And this medium changes also from subtle to gross, from dry to damp, according to the vapours of the earth, which are continually rising. This medium, by these changes, gives to the image of the stars transmitted by it a certain dimness when it is thick,

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[1] See note to Canzone 2, ver. 5. I cannot find any place in the *Commedia* or elsewhere where *the star* necessarily means *the sun.* It seems to be always put, as here, by synecdoche for *the stars.* In the *Inferno*, 2. 55, we read—

"Her eyes were shining brighter than *the star*,"

which Scartazzini explains to mean *the stars.*

and certain colours according to its dryness or humidity.[1]

6. Then, again, they [the stars] may appear thus [obscured] by fault of the visual organ, that is, the eye, which by disease or fatigue is changed in colour and becomes weak; so that it often happens that if the membrane of the pupil be suffused with blood from the effect of some malady, everything looks red; and therefore the stars also would look red.[2] And when the sight is weak, it suffers from a dispersion of the spirits [of vision],[3] so that things do not look united but disjoined, almost as our writing does upon wet paper. And this is why many, when they wish to read, remove the writing further from their eyes, because then its image comes to them more easily and more clearly, and so the letters become plainer to the sight. And therefore even the stars may seem blurred; and I experienced this the very year that this canzone was born, because, having wearied my eyes with too much reading, I weakened my sight so much[4] that all the stars seemed to me

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"When the vapours humid and condensed
Begin to dissipate themselves, the sphere
Of the sun feebly enters in among them."

(*Purg.*, 17. 5.)

Witte wished to omit the words "dryness or," as the dryness of the air does not affect colour; but this is not according to the physics of Dante, as Giuliani justly remarks.

[2] "I seemed to see the sun so obscured that the stars were of such a colour that I knew they were weeping" (*Vita Nuova*, § 23).

[3] Or the visual rays.

[4] Literally, "I so weakened the visual spirits." "To understand the expressions 'visual spirits,' 'body of the eye,' etc., we have only to recall the saying of Aristotle, that 'if the eye were an animate being, vision would be its soul; for this is the ideal essence of the eye'" (*De Anima*, bk. i.) (Davidson). See § 32 of the *Vita Nuova*, where Dante speaks of suffering from weak eyes on account of much weeping.

to have their light obscured by some white mist.[1] And by a long rest in cold and dark places, and by cooling the body of the eye with fresh water, their scattered powers were reunited, and the former good condition of my sight returned. And thus we see many causes for the reasons noted, whereby the stars may seem to be other than they are.

Chapter X.

1. Leaving this digression, which was necessary that we might see the truth, I return to the proposition, and say that as our eyes at times consider, that is, judge, the condition of the sun to be other than it really is, so this *ballata* judged this lady according to appearances, that differed from the truth because of the infirmity of the soul, which was moved by too much desire. And this I show when I say, "*Because the soul did fear*" so much, that everything I saw in her [this lady's] presence appeared scornful to me. And here be it known, that the more closely the active is united with the passive agent, so much the greater and stronger is the passion, as we may understand from what the Philosopher has said in his [book] *On Generation.* Therefore the closer the thing desired comes to him who desires it, the greater the desire is;[2] and the more passionate the soul, the

[1] *Albore*, as before explained, conveys an idea of the whiteness of dawn.

[2] "Every beloved thing is the more beloved as it is nearer the lover" (*De Mon.*, i. 13).

> "And now before the splendours of the dawn
> That unto pilgrims the more grateful glow,
> As home returning, nearer still they lodge."
>
> (*Purg.*, 27. 110.)

more closely it unites with the carnal, and the more entirely it abandons the rational part of itself, so that the person can no longer judge like a man, but as it were like an animal, according to appearances, but not according to the truth. And this is why her looks, which in reality were modest, seemed proud and cruel [to this fearful soul]; and it was according to such a judgment of the senses that that *ballata* spoke. And so we may easily see that the canzone judges this lady according to the truth, by its very discordance with the other one.

2. And not without reason do I say, "*Wherever she may bend her eyes on me*," and not wherever *I* may see her. But in this I wish to make evident the great power that her eyes had over me; for as if I had been transparent, their rays penetrated every part of me.[1] And for this we might assign both natural and supernatural reasons: but let it suffice here to have said thus much; in another place I will discuss this more fittingly.

3. Then when I say, "*And thus excuse thyself if need there be*," I command the canzone, for the reasons mentioned, to excuse itself wherever it may be necessary, that is, wherever there may be any suspicion of this contradiction; which is none other than to say—let any one who considers that this canzone does not accord with that *ballata*, mark the reason here given. And such a figure is very laudable in rhetoric, and also necessary; that is, this directing of the words to one person and the meaning to

[1] "As soon as on my vision smote the power
Sublime, that had already pierced me through."
(*Purg.*, 30. 40.)

another; because admonition is always laudable and necessary, but is not always becoming in the mouth of every one. Wherefore when the son is cognizant of the vices of the father, and when the servant is cognizant of the vices of his lord, and when the friend knows that shame would come to his friend through such admonition, or that it would diminish his honour, or when he knows his friend to be not patient but wrathful under admonition, then this figure is most beautiful and most useful, and is called *Dissimulation.*[1] And it is like the work of a wise warrior, who attacks the fortress on one side in order to draw off the defence of the other, for the intention of the commander and the combat are not directed to the same point.

4. And I command this canzone also to beg this lady's permission to speak of her; whereby it may be understood that a man should not presume to praise any one without well considering whether it would be pleasant to the person praised; because a person often blames where he thinks he is praising, either by the fault of the speaker, or by the fault of him who listens.[2] Whence we need to use great discretion in this matter; which discretion almost amounts to asking permission, as I have told this canzone to do. And here ends all the literal meaning of this book; for the order of the work demands that we should now proceed to the allegorical exposition, following the truth[3] [*i.e.* which is the true one].

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[1] *Conv.*, ii. 12, par. 2. [2] *Conv.* iv. 2, par. 4.
[3] "Its allegory, that is, the hidden truth" (*Conv.*, ii. 1).

CHAPTER XI.

1. RETURNING again to the beginning, as our order demands, I say that this lady is that lady of the intellect who is called *Philosophy*. But because praise naturally inspires one with a desire to know the person praised, and to know a thing is to know what it is considered in itself and in all its causes,[1] as the Philosopher says in the first of the *Physics;* and this the name does not[2] explain (although it signifies it, as is said in the fourth of the *Metaphysics*, where it is said that the definition is that reason that the name signifies); therefore it is now proper that before we proceed with her praises we should explain what this Philosophy is, that is, what this name signifies. And having explained this, we can then more effectively treat the present allegory. And I will first tell to whom this name was first given, and then I will proceed to its definition and signification.

2. I say, then, that of old in Italy, almost from the beginning of the foundation of Rome (which was seven hundred and fifty years, a little more or less, before the coming of the Saviour, according to the

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[1] "Considered in itself and all its *things*" is the reading of Fraticelli; but Giuliani reads *cause*, and not *cose*, on the authority of the passage from Aristotle here referred to: "*Tunc unamquamque rem, scire eos putamus, cum causas primas, principiaque prima et usque ad elementa cognoscimus*" (*Phys.*, i. 2).

[2] Giuliani supplies this "not," which seems quite necessary to the sense. He thinks that the copyists have made a mistake here in substituting iv. for vi., as it is in the *sixth* book that Aristotle says, "*Quorumcunque ratio est definitio.*" But in both books he says repeatedly that "a definition declares the essence of a thing."

writings of Paul Orosius[1]), almost in the time of Numa Pompilius, second king of the Romans, there lived a most noble philosopher, called Pythagoras. And that he was of that age, appears from something alluded to incidentally by Titus Livius in the first part of his book. And before him the followers of science were called, not *philosophers*, but *wise men*, such as were those seven most ancient sages whose names are still known to fame; the first of whom was called Solon, the second Chilon, the third Periander, the fourth Thales, the fifth Cleobulus, the sixth Bias, the seventh Pittacus. This Pythagoras, being asked if he called himself a wise man, denied himself that name, and said that he was not wise, but a lover of wisdom. And thence it happened afterwards that all students of wisdom were called *lovers of wisdom*, that is, philosophers; for *philo* and *sophia* in Greek are equivalent to *love* and *wisdom*. Whence we may see that these two words make up the name *philosopher*, that is to say, lover of wisdom; which we may observe is not a term of arrogance, but of humility. From this came the name of its special act, *philosophy*, as from *friend* came the name of the special act, friendship. Whence we may see, con-

[1] "The advocate of the Christian centuries,
Out of whose rhetoric Augustine was furnished."
(*Par.*, 10. 120.)

Paul Orosius was a Spanish presbyter, born at Tarragona, near the close of the fourth century. In his youth he visited St. Augustine in Africa, then went to Palestine to complete his studies under St. Jerome at Bethlehem, and while there arraigned Pelagius for heresy before the Bishop of Jerusalem. The work by which he is chiefly known is *The Seven Books of Histories*, a chronicle of the world from the creation to his own time. Of this work (which was also translated into Anglo-Saxon by King Alfred) St. Augustine availed himself in writing his *City of God*.

sidering the meaning of the first and second words, that philosophy is no other than a friendship for wisdom, or rather for knowledge; wherefore any one might be called a philosopher, according to that natural love which inspires all men with a desire for knowledge.[1] But because the essential passions [of human nature] are common to all, we do not speak of them by a word which defines any one who may participate in them; thus, we do not say, "John the friend of Martin," meaning solely that natural friendliness which makes all men each other's friend, but that friendship over and above the natural [impulse] which is special and distinct in particular persons. Thus no one is called a philosopher on account of this common love [of knowledge].

3. It is the opinion of Aristotle, in the eighth of the *Ethics*,[2] that he may be called a friend whose friendship is not concealed from the person beloved, and to whom also the beloved person is a friend, so that their good will is mutual;[3] and this must come either from advantage, or pleasure, or disinterestedness. And thus, in order to be a philosopher, there must be the love of wisdom inspiring one of the parties with affection, and there must be the study and devotion which make the other also affectionate, so that intimacy and demonstrations of good will may arise

[1] *Conv.*, i. 1; iii. 15.

[2] *Ethics*, viii. 3, where Aristotle describes the three kinds of friendship, arising from advantage, pleasure, and disinterestedness.

[3] "The love
Kindled by virtue aye another kindles,
Provided outwardly its flame appear."
(*Purg.*, 22. 10.)

"Love that excuseth no one loved from loving."
(*Inf.*, 5. 103.)

between them; because without love and without study one cannot be called a philosopher, but it is necessary that both should exist. And just as friendship for the sake of advantage or pleasure is not true friendship, but accidental, as the *Ethics* demonstrates,[1] so philosophy for the sake of pleasure or of profit is not true philosophy, but accidental. Therefore no one should be called a true philosopher who is the friend of a partial wisdom; like many who delight in repeating poems and in studying them, and who take pleasure in studying rhetoric and music, but fly from and abandon the other sciences, which are all members of [the body of] wisdom. Nor should he be called a true philosopher who is the friend of wisdom for the sake of profit; such as are those lawyers, doctors (and nearly all the religious), who do not study for the sake of knowledge, but to gain riches and dignities;[2] and if given that which they mean to acquire, they no longer pursue their studies. And as of all kinds of friendship, that which exists for the sake of profit is the least worthy to be called friendship, so such as these have less right to the name of philosopher than any of the others. But

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[1] In the chapter quoted above. *Accidental* in the scholastic sense of not essential or necessary.

[2] Dante never missed an occasion to reprove greed in the Church or elsewhere (see *Conv.*, i. 9, par. 1, where he reproves those who pursue literature for gain).

> "One after laws, and one to aphorisms
> Was going, and one following the priesthood."
> (*Par.*, 11. 4.)
>
> "Not for the world which people toil for now,
> . . . . . .
> But through his longing after the true manna."
> (*Par.*, 12. 82–84.)

because a friendship founded upon disinterestedness is true and perfect and perpetual, so that philosophy is true and perfect which is inspired solely by a sincere love without any other consideration, and by the goodness of the soul beloved; that is, by a righteous desire and for a righteous reason. And as true friendship among men makes them love each other entirely, so we may say that the true philosopher loves Wisdom entirely, and that Wisdom loves the philosopher entirely, inasmuch as she draws him wholly to herself, and allows none of his thoughts to wander to other things. Whence this Wisdom says in the Proverbs of Solomon,[1] "I love them that love me." And as true friendship, apart from the soul, considered solely in itself, has for *subject*[2] the knowledge of virtuous action, and for *form* the desire for it; so philosophy, apart from the soul, considered by itself, has for *subject* the understanding, and for *form* an almost divine love for the intelligible.[3] And as the efficient cause of true friendship is goodness, so the efficient cause of philosophy is truth. And as the end of true friendship is the virtuous delight that proceeds from the intercourse[4] proper to humanity, that is, according to reason (as Aristotle seems to feel in the ninth of the *Ethics*), so the end of philo-

[1] Prov. viii. 17.

[2] "Never from the welfare
Of its own subject can love turn its sight."
(*Purg.*, 17. 106.)

Subject in scholastic language, in its most restricted sense, may, as here, mean an entity, but generally means the underlying element, "the cause of accident;" and *form* is the vital principle of a thing.

[3] Pederzini explains, "the thing to be understood."

[4] Giuliani prefers to read "unanimity," defined by Aristotle (*Ethics*, ix. 6) as *concerted action.*

sophy is that most excellent delight which suffers no intermission or defect, that is, the true felicity which is acquired in the contemplation of truth.[1] And thus we may see who this my lady now is, by all these her causes, and her reason; and why she is called Philosophy; and who is the true philosopher, and who is one by accident.[2]

4. But because sometimes, in some fervour of the mind, the one and the other subject[3] of actions or passions may be called by the name of the action or the passion itself (as Virgil does in the second of the *Æneid*, where he calls Hector[4] "O light"—which is action—"and hope of the Trojans!" which is passion, because he was neither *light* nor *hope*, but was the *subject* [or source] whence came to them the light of counsel, and the subject in which they reposed all their hope of safety; and as Statius does, in the fifth of the *Thebaid*, when Hypsipyle[5] says to Archemoros, "O *consolation* of things and country lost, O *honour* of my servitude!"[6] and as we say daily, when pointing out a friend, "Behold my friendship;"[7] and the father calls his child "my love"); so, by long custom, the sciences on which Philosophy

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[1] *Conv.*, iii. 8, par. 2; iii. 13, par. 2.

[2] In the scholastic sense of the non-essential.

[3] See note 2, par. 3, of this chapter.

[4] All the texts have *Æneas*, an evident error, as the passage referred to (*Æn.*, ii. 281) reads, "*quibus Hector, ab oris Expectate venis?*"

[5] "There, with his tokens and with ornate words,
Did he deceive Hypsipyle."
(*Inf.*, 18. 91.)

[6] "O rerum et patriæ solamen ademptæ,
Servitiique decus!"
(*Theb.*, v. 678.)

[7] "*Friendship*, in this very pretty use of the term, is not found in the dictionary" (Perticari).

most fervently fixes her gaze are called by her name, such as Natural Science, Morals, and Metaphysics. Which latter, because more necessarily does this lady fix her gaze thereon, and with more fervour, is called the first Philosophy.[1] Whence we may see how, in a secondary manner, the [other] sciences are called Philosophy. And since we have seen how the first of all is true Philosophy in its essence[2] (which is this lady of whom I speak), and how her noble name has been given by custom to the sciences, I will proceed further with her praises.

CHAPTER XII.

1. IN the first chapter of this book the reason that moved me to write this canzone was so thoroughly discussed that there is no need to discuss it further, because by the exposition already given [of the letter] it may be very readily deduced.[3] And therefore, according to the divisions made for the literal meaning, I will run through this,[4] [the allegorical], turning the sense of the letter [into allegory] wherever it may be necessary.

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[1] The editors differ very much about this sentence. The true meaning seems to be that "Philosophy" is more nearly akin to Metaphysics than to the other sciences, and that, therefore, Metaphysics is properly called "the first Philosophy," as in *Conv.*, i. 1, and ii. 14.

[2] Or in the abstract.

[3] Or recollected. Dante uses the word *riducere* in the same sense, in *Purg.*, 23. 15, "If thou recall to mind," etc.

[4] Fraticelli wishes to make "this" refer to the canzone, but it seems to me that the sense is quite plain, especially as, at the end of ch. 10, Dante has declared that, having finished the *literal* exposition, he wishes to proceed to the *allegorical* (or *true*).

2. I say, "Love, that within my mind doth hold discourse." By *love* I mean the *study*[1] I have given to gain the love of this lady. Here we must know that *study* may be taken in two senses. It is one [kind of] study which leads man to the acquisition of art and science, and another which (having acquired them) he employs in their practice. And the former it is that I here call *love*, which informed my mind with continual, novel, and most lofty meditations upon this lady, as has been shown above; such as are generally the result of the study one gives to win friendship, because in desiring the friendship one first thinks a great deal about it. Such is the study and the affection which in men generally precedes the begetting of friendship, when Love is already born on the one side, and desires and strives that it may be on the other; because, as has been said above, Philosophy exists when the soul and Wisdom become such friends that the one is entirely beloved by the other. Nor is it necessary in the present exposition [of the allegory] to discuss this first verse (which was done as a proem to the literal explanation), because by means of that first [exposition] it is very easy to make out its second [or allegorical] meaning.

3. Therefore we must go on to the second verse (which is the beginning of the subject), there where

[1] In book ii. ch. 16, Dante says, "By *love*, in this allegory, is always to be understood that *study* [or devotion] of the soul enamoured of a thing to that thing." In the *Commedia*, he uses the word in two senses, as here; in *Purg.*, 18. 58, we have "the *study* [*i.e.* instinct] of the bee to make its honey," and in the same canto, line 105, we read "that *study* [*i.e.* devotion] to good works may quicken grace." In this sentence of the *Convito* we have first *instinct*, like that of the bee, and then *devotion*, like that of the virtuous to good works.

I say, "The sun, that daily circleth round the world." Here be it known that as it is convenient with this subject to treat of things not perceptible by the senses by means of things perceptible, so it is also convenient to treat of incomprehensible things by means of things that are intelligible.[1] And since in the literal exposition we began by speaking of the corporal and sensible sun, so now we have to speak of the spiritual and incomprehensible Sun, which is God.[2]

4. There is no sensible thing in all the world more worthy to be an image of God than the sun, which with its sensible light illumines first itself, and then all celestial and elementary bodies;[3] so God first illumines Himself with intellectual light, and then the celestial and other Intelligences.[4] The sun vivifies all things by its heat, and if it corrupts some, it is not as an intentional cause, but as an accidental effect; and so God vivifies all things by His goodness, and if any are wicked, it is not the Divine intention that they should be so, but it happens from some accident

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[1] See *Conv.*, iii. 8, par. 8; iv. 10, 16, 22.

[2] "The Sun of the angels."
(*Par.*, 10. 53.)
"That Sun which irradiates all our band."
(*Par.*, 25. 54.)
"That high Light which of itself is true."
(*Par.*, 33. 54.)

[3] "He who all the world enlightens."
(*Par.*, 20. 1.)
It being the opinion of Dante's time that *all* the stars derived their light from the sun.

[4] It is Giuliani who suggests reading *Intelligences* here, instead of *intelligible* [things].
"And as a mirror, one reflects the other."
(*Purg.*, 15. 75.)

in the working out of the intended effect.[1] For if God created the good and the wicked angels, He did not create both with intention, but only the good. Then followed, apart from His intention, the wickedness of the evil spirits ; but not so far apart from His intention that God did not know how to see within Himself beforehand all their wickedness. But such was His loving desire to produce the spiritual creature, that the prescience that some of them would come to a bad end could not, and should not, deter God from their production ; for it would not redound to the praise of Nature if, knowing well that a certain part of the flowers of some tree would be lost, she should allow it to produce none, and on account of the sterile should give up the production of the fruitful. I say, then, that God, who comprehends all things (for His comprehension is His encircling[2]), sees nothing so fair as when He looks upon the place where this Philosophy is.[3] For although God, beholding Himself, sees all things at once, since the distinction of things is in Him (as the effect is in the cause), He also beholds them as distinct. Therefore He sees this lady to be absolutely the most noble of all, inasmuch as He sees her most perfectly in Himself and in His Essence. For if we recall to mind what has been said before, Philosophy is a loving use of

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[1] "The occasion of the fall was the accursed
Presumption of that one, whom thou hast seen
By all the burden of the world oppressed."
(*Par.*, 29. 55.)

[2] "The sun, that daily *circleth* round the world."

[3] "For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of stars: being compared with the light, she is found before it" (Wisd. vii. 29).

Wisdom; which exists above all in God, because in Him is supreme Wisdom, and supreme Love, and supreme Power,[1] which cannot exist elsewhere, except as it proceeds from Him. Therefore the Divine Philosophy is of the Divine Essence, because in Him can be nothing added to His essence; and she is most noble, because the Divine essence is most noble; and she exists in Him perfectly and truly, as it were by eternal wedlock.[2] With the other intelligences she abides in a less perfect manner, as a beloved,[3] whom no lover enjoys entirely, but satisfies his longing by gazing upon her face. Wherefore we may say that God sees no other thing (that is, comprehends nothing) so noble as this lady; I say no *other* thing, inasmuch as He sees and distinguishes other things, as we have said, seeing that He is the cause of all. Oh, most noble and most excellent heart, that hath communion with the Bride of the Emperor[4] of

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[1] The word in the original is *atto*, here meaning "potentiality" or "power." See *Inf.*, 3. 5—

"Divine Omnipotence created me,
The highest Wisdom, and the primal Love."

[2] "For she is a breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty. . . . She is the brightness of the everlasting Light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of His goodness" (Wisd. vii. 25–26).

[3] "O love of the first lover, O Divine!" Dante calls Beatrice (*Par.*, 4. 118). The word *druda* here means the *object* of love, the beloved one, instead of its usual meaning of "lover." "I loved her, and sought her out from my youth. I desired to make her my spouse, and I was a lover of her beauty" (Wisd. viii. 2). "The first man knew her not perfectly; no more shall the last find her out" (Ecclus. xxiv. 28).

[4] "That *Emperor* who reigns above."
(*Inf.*, 1. 124.)

"The *Emperor* who reigneth evermore."
(*Par.*, 12. 40.)

Heaven! and not Bride only, but most delectable Sister and Daughter![1]

Chapter XIII.

1. Having seen how, in the beginning of this lady's praises, it was subtly said that she is of the Divine Substance,[2] primarily considered, we must now proceed to see how I say she exists secondarily in the causated Intelligences.[3] I say, then, "*All the celestial Powers gaze on her;*" where it must be observed that I say *celestial* in that relation to God before mentioned; and this excludes those Intelligences who are exiled from their celestial country, and who cannot philosophize;[4] because love is entirely extinct in them, and to philosophize, as has been already said, we must have love.[5] Wherefore we see that the infernal Intelligences are deprived of the sight of this most

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[1] "The *Bride* of holiness."
(*Inf.*, 19. 3.)
"In that same hour the *Bride* of God ariseth."
(*Par.*, 10. 140.)
"Whom Christ in His own blood had made His *Bride*."
(*Par.*, 31. 3.)
"O holy *sister* mine, that doth implore us!"
(*Par.*, 24. 28.)
(See *Conv.*, ii. 16, last par.)

[2] "Therefore Divine Philosophy is of the Divine Essence" (see previous chapter).

[3] "Overseeing all things, and going through all understanding, pure, and most subtile spirits" (Wisd. vii. 23).

[4] "The people dolorous, who have lost for aye
The good of the intellect."
(*Inf.*, 3. 17; and see note 1, next page.)

[5] "Philosophy being a *loving* use of wisdom;" and, as Fornari says, "Dante believes love necessary to knowledge, and wisdom is, for him, love and knowledge, love coming even before knowledge, or rather knowledge being in proportion to love."

beautiful one; and because she is the beatitude of the intellect,[1] her loss is most bitter and full of all sorrow.[2]

2. Then when I say, "*And all her faithful lovers here below,*" I descend to show how, in a secondary manner, she also comes to human intelligence; of which human philosophy my book goes on to treat, praising it. I say, then, that those who love her here, that is, in this life, feel her in their thoughts, not always, but when Love makes them feel her peace.[3] Here we must notice three things which are touched upon in this text. The first is when it is said, "*all her faithful lovers,*" where they seem to be distinguished from mankind in general; and it is necessary to do this, because (according to what is quite evident, and is purposely discussed in the following book[4]) the greater part of mankind live more according to the senses than the reason. And for those who live according to the senses, to love her is impossible, because they can have no apprehension of her.

3. The second thing is when I say, "*When Love hath made them feel,*" etc., where there seems to be a distinction of time; for although the Intelligences separate [from matter, *i.e.* the Angels] can behold this

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[1] See *Ep. to Can Grande*, par. 33, "The true beatitude consists in knowing the principle of truth," etc. The good of the intellect, says St. Thomas Aquinas, is Truth (see *Conv.*, i. 2; ii. 14; iii. 5; iv. 22).

[2] "These have no longer any hope of death,
And this blind life of theirs is so debased
That they are envious of all other fate."
(*Inf.*, 3. 46.)

[3] "The contentment which in Paradise is perpetual, cannot to any here be such" (*Conv.*, iii. 8, par. 2).

[4] Book iv., treating of the Noble Life.

lady continually, nevertheless human intelligence cannot do this; because human nature (apart from that which satisfies the intellect and reason) has need of many things besides contemplation for its sustenance; wherefore our wisdom comes to us only occasionally, and not as an actual thing,[1] and this is not so with the other Intelligences, who alone possess a perfect intellectual nature. Therefore, when our soul is not in the act of contemplation, we cannot truly say that she is in Philosophy, except in so far as she has the habit of it,[2] and the power to awaken it; and therefore this lady is sometimes with those who love her here below, and sometimes not.

4. The third thing is when I tell the time when these are with her; that is, when Love makes them feel her peace; which means only when man is actually absorbed in contemplation, for devotion to this lady does not make one feel her peace, except in the act of speculation.[3] And thus we see how this lady abides primarily with God, secondarily with the other Intelligences separate [from matter] in their continual contemplation of her, and then with the human intellect in its discontinuous contemplation.

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[1] That is, Wisdom is not present with us as an essential part of our nature, as she is with the angels (see *Conv.*, iii. 7).

[2] This is the literal translation of this sentence, which seems to mean that we can only call our soul one with Philosophy (except while actually engaged in speculation) in so far as she has the habit of being with her, and the power to awaken her.

[3] The word "devotion" in the original is "study," and here it seems as if Dante made the distinction of all mystics between the knowledge acquired by the intellectual faculties and that received by spiritual intuition.

> "There is a light above, that visible makes
> God the Creator unto every creature,
> Who in His sight alone doth feel His peace."
> (*Par.*, 30. 100.)

5. Nevertheless, the man who takes her as his sovereign lady should always be called *philosopher*, even though he be not always engaged in the supreme act of philosophy; because other men are usually named from their habit [of life[1]]. Whence we call a man good, not only while performing virtuous actions, but because he has the habit of goodness; and we call a man eloquent, even when he is not speaking, because he has the habit of eloquence, or talking well.

6. And as regards this philosophy, in so far as human intelligence partakes of it, the following praises are now to be set forth, a great part of its bounty being bestowed upon human nature. I say next, then, "*And He who gives her taketh such delight In her sweet being*," from whom, as from the primal fount, it is derived, that in her the capacity of our nature is exceeded, [although] that is beautiful and good.[2] Therefore, of those who come to associate with her, few come where they can properly be said to have acquired the habit of philosophy, because that first study (in which this habit is generated) cannot acquire her in perfection.[3] And here we see her supreme praise, in that, perfect or imperfect, she never loses the name of perfection. And on account of this excellence of hers, it is said that the soul of Philosophy "*Shines through the mortal frame in which*

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[1] "Things should be named after the highest nobility of their form" (*Conv.*, ii. 8). That man has a right to be called philosopher the general tenor of whose life is contemplative.

[2] *Conv.*, iii. 6, par. 4.

[3] See *Conv.*, iii. 12, where we are told that the *first study* is the instinct that impels man to the pursuit of knowledge, the *second* the devotion he displays in the use of it.

it dwells;" that is, that God fills her always with His light.[1] And here we must recall to mind what has been said above, that Love is the *form* of Philosophy,[2] and is therefore here called her soul. Which Love is manifest in the use of Wisdom, and this use brings with it wonderful beauties, that is, content in any condition of time, and disdain of those things which other men make their masters.[3] Whence it happens that the other miserable ones who see this, thinking over their defects, after feeling the desire for perfection, fall into the weariness of sighs; and this is meant where it says—

> "And the eyes of those on whom her light doth shine,
> Send messengers to the heart filled with desire,
> That take the air again in form of sighs."

Chapter XIV.

1. As in the literal exposition, after the general praises we descend to the special, first on the part of the soul, then on the part of the body; so now the text proceeds, after the general, to the special commendations. Because, as has been said before, Philosophy here has Wisdom for material subject, and Love for form, and, as a compound of the two, the habit of contemplation. Whence in the following

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[1] "Light intellectual replete with love,
Love of true good replete with ecstasy,
Ecstasy that transcendeth every sweetness."
(*Par.*, 30. 40.)

[2] "Philosophy . . . has for its form an almost Divine love" (*Conv.*, iii. 11).

[3] "Where the love of philosophy is resplendent, other loves grow dim and almost spent" (*Conv.*, iii. 14).

verse, beginning "*And Power Divine descends to dwell in her*," I intend to praise the love which is part of Philosophy. Here we must observe that for the virtue of one thing to descend upon another, that other thing must be brought to the first one's likeness; as we see plainly in all natural agencies, whose virtue, descending upon passive things, brings them to resemble themselves [*i.e.* these agencies] in so far as they are capable of so doing. So we see the sun, that, sending his rays here below, makes all things to resemble his own brightness, as far as they, of their own nature, are capable of receiving light.[1] Thus I say that God brings this Love to His own likeness, in so far as it is possible for it to resemble Him.

2. And I declare the quality of the thing created[2] when I say, "*As in the angel that beholds His face.*" Here we must observe that the first Agent, that is, God, gives to all things of His power, either by direct rays or by reflected splendour.[3] Wherefore the Divine Light shines directly upon the Intelligences,[4]

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[1] "The greatest of the ministers of nature,
Who with the power of heaven the world imprints."
(*Par.*, 10. 28.)

[2] Giuliani says with justice that this should be "irradiated," not "created," as Dante is describing the methods of Divine illumination.

[3] "The primal Light, that all irradiates,
By modes as many is received therein,
As are the splendours wherewith it is mated."
(*Par.*, 29. 136.)

"That living Light
. . . . . .
Through its own goodness reunites its rays,
In nine subsistences, as in a mirror,
Itself eternally remaining One."
(*Par.*, 13. 55–60.)

and upon others is reflected from these first illuminated Intelligences.[1]

3. But because we have here spoken of *light* and *splendour*, in order that these words may be perfectly understood, I will explain their different meanings according to the opinion of Avicenna.[2] I say that the custom of philosophy is to call Heaven *Light*,[3] inasmuch as light has therein its primal source; to call light a *ray*[4] when it passes through the medium [of the atmosphere] to the first body in which it is arrested; to call it *splendour* when it is reflected from some directly illuminated thing.[5] I say, then, that the Divine Power without any medium draws this Love to its own likeness. And this may be made especially evident thus, because, the Divine Love being eternal, its object must of necessity be eternal also, that eternal may be the things that He loves.[6] And thus this [Divine Love] maketh this Love [which is the soul of Philosophy] to love, because Wisdom, to

[1] "Thence it descends to the last potencies."

"According to the Kabbala, as according to the doctrine of Zoroaster, all that exists emanates from a source of infinite light. . . . Everything being an emanation from the Supreme Being, the nearer the creature approaches him, the more perfect it is; the farther away in the scale of emanations, the more it loses in purity" (Matter, *History of Gnosticism*, vol. i. p. 176, *et seq.*).

[2] *Opus egregium de Anima*, etc., Venetiis, 1508.

[3] "O Light eterne, sole in thyself that dwellest!"
(*Par.*, 33. 124.)

[4] "Even as water doth receive
A ray of light, remaining still unbroken."
(*Par.*, 2. 35.)

[5] "O splendour of the living Light eternal!"
(*Par.*, 31. 139.)

[6] "O Light eterne, sole in thyself that dwellest,
Sole knowest thyself, and, known unto thyself
And knowing, lovest and smilest on thyself!"
(*Par.*, 33. 124.)

which this Love inclines, is eternal.[1] Wherefore it is written of her, "He created me from the beginning before the ages, and in the age to come I shall not fail."[2] And in the Proverbs of Solomon[3] this Wisdom says, "I was set up from everlasting." And in the beginning of the Gospel of John her eternity is plainly declared.[4] And thus it comes to pass, that where this Love [of Wisdom] shines, all other loves grow dim and almost spent; because its eternal object subdues and overpowers all other objects beyond all proportion; and therefore the most excellent philosophers have plainly shown this in their actions, by which we know that they took no heed of anything but Wisdom.[5] For this Democritus took no care of his own person, and never cut either his beard, his hair, or his nails. Plato, indifferent to worldly goods, cared nothing for royal dignity, for he was the son of a king.[6] Aristotle, caring for no

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[1] That is, God inspires the soul of Philosophy with the love of Wisdom, which is eternal, and therefore part of the Divine nature.

[2] Ecclus. xxiv. 9; and see also Wisd. ix. 9, "She was present with Thee when Thou madest the world."

[3] Prov. viii. 23.

[4] Here Wisdom is identified with the Logos (see next chapter, par. 7).

[5] "And therefore when we hear or see a thing
That keeps the soul intently bent upon it,
Time passes by, and we perceive it not.
Because one faculty is that which listens,
And other that possessing the whole soul;
The one is as if bound, the other free."
(*Purg.*, 4. 7–12.)

[6] Dante must have meant this in a mystical sense, or have been strangely ignorant of Plato's life, as "he was not the son of a king, nor had there been kings in Athens for six centuries before his time. Nor was he entirely indifferent to worldly goods, having accepted eighty talents from Dionysius to buy books with. And he was careful in his dress to the verge of effeminacy" (Mil. Eds.).

other friend [than Wisdom], disputed with his best friend (except her[1]) as well as with the above-named Plato. And since we are speaking of these, how many others we find[2] that for the sake of these ideas have held their lives in contempt, such as Zeno, Socrates, Seneca, and many others! And therefore it is evident that the Divine Power, in angelic mode,[3] in this Love descends upon men; and to prove this, the text afterwards says, "*And let the lady fair who doubts my word, Go where she goes, and study all her ways.*" By the lady fair is meant the noble and intellectual soul, free in her special power, which is reason;[4] for other souls cannot be called ladies, but servants,[5] since they do not exist for themselves, but for others; and the Philosopher says, in the first of *Metaphysics*, that that thing is free which exists for itself and not for another.[5]

4. It says, "*Go where she goes, and study all her ways;*" that is, associate with this Love, and look upon that which is within it; and it touches in part upon this where it says, "There where she speaks, descends," etc.; that is, where Philosophy is actually

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[1] Wisdom being always the first of friends. "The master of philosophers teaches us that truth is to be preferred above all friends" (*Ep. Card. Ital.*, § 5). And see *Conv.*, iv. 8, par. 5.

[2] Reading of Giuliani. Fraticelli gives it, "And why should we speak of these when we find so many others," etc. ?

[3] That is, directly, without a medium. Giuliani suggests reading "as in the angel," referring to "the angel that beholds His face" of the canzone, instead of to the angelic nature in general.

[4] "A lady full of sweetness, adorned with virtue, marvellous in knowledge, *glorious in liberty*" (*Conv.*, ii. 16).

[5] "As a man is free who exists for his own sake and not for another's, so this (Wisdom) alone of the sciences is free, for this alone exists for its own sake" (*Met.*, i. ch. 2). And see *De Mon.*, i. 14, where the same passage is quoted.

present,[1] a celestial thought[2] descends, which tells us she is of more than human creation.[3] It says *from heaven*, to give us to understand that not only herself, but the thoughts which are her friends, are abstracted from low and earthly things.

5. Then afterwards it relates how she encourages and kindles love wherever she shows herself, by the sweetness of her actions, which are all like her, being virtuous, gentle, and without any extravagance. And subsequently, as a still greater inducement to association with her, it says, "*Noble is that In every lady found, that's found in her; And fair, so far as it resembles her.*" And again it adds, "And we may say of her, Her aspect wins," etc., where we must observe that the looks of this lady were so liberally ordained for us, not only that we might gaze upon her face, which she shows us, but that we might desire to win those things she keeps concealed. Wherefore, as through her many of these hidden things are perceived by our reason (and consequently to perceive by reason without her would seem a miracle); so by her means we believe that every miracle may be reasonable to a higher intellect, and therefore pos-

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[1] "In atto," the scholastic *in actu*, "actively," as opposed to "potentially." See *Purg.*, 18. 20—

> "The soul, which is created prone to love,
> Is swiftly drawn to everything that pleases,
> As soon as actual pleasure moveth her."

Here we have the distinction between the capacity for pleasure and the active feeling.

[2] The words of the canzone are, "A spirit from heaven."

[3] The word in the original is "operation," a word used by Dante in many ways, but always in the sense of some form of action. See *Purg.*, 17. 105—

> "Each *operation* that doth merit pain."

sible. Whence our precious *faith* has its origin, from which comes the *hope* of things desired, but not seen ;[1] and from this are born the works of *charity*. By which three virtues[2] we ascend to philosophize in that celestial Athens, where Stoics, and Peripatetics and Epicureans, by the art of Eternal Truth, harmoniously concur in one desire.[3]

Chapter XV.

1. In the preceding chapter this glorious lady is commended according to one of her component parts, that is, Love ; now in this one (in which I intend to explain the verse commencing "*That which we read in her sweet countenance*") it is proper to proceed with the praise of her other part, that is, Wisdom.

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[1] Witte's reading. The Vulgate reads, "the hope of the foreseen desire." See *Par.*, 24. 64—

> "Faith is the substance of the things we hope for,
> And evidence of those that are not seen."

(Comp. Heb. i. 1.)

[2] "The three holy virtues" (*Purg.*, 7. 34), Faith, Hope, and Charity. See also *Purg.*, 29. 121 ; and *Purg.*, 31. 111, "The three beyond, that more profoundly see." The cardinal virtues prepare man for the knowledge of truth, but for full comprehension of the celestial verities, the theological virtues are necessary (see St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.*, p. i. qu. 62, art. 3). In *Purg.*, 31. 107, the four cardinal virtues say they were with Beatrice before she descended into the world ; and in the Book of Wisdom (viii. 7), Wisdom teaches temperance and prudence, justice and fortitude, and is described as present with God before the creation of the earth (ix. 9). In the *Vita Nuova* (§§ 26 and 27), those who meet her describe Beatrice as "no woman, but one of the most blessed angels of heaven," and that "those who go with her are clothed upon with gentleness and faith and love." It is "the three holy virtues" that enable the three sects (which in *Conv.*, iv. 22, are explained to represent the participants in the active life) to ascend to "the celestial Athens" of the contemplative life, or "the fruition of the Divine aspect."

[3] "And His will is our peace."

(*Par.*, 3. 85.)

2. The text says, then, that in her face we see things which show us the joys of Paradise, and defines the place of their appearance, that is, in the eyes and the smile.[1] And here we must know that the eyes of Wisdom are her *demonstrations*, in which we see the truth with the greatest certitude; and her smile is her *persuasions*, in which the inner light of Wisdom shines without any veil;[2] and in these two we feel

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[1] "Conquering me with the radiance of a smile,
She said to me, 'Turn thee about and listen;
Not in mine eyes alone is Paradise.'"
(*Par.*, 18. 19.)

(See note 4 to par. 3, book iii. ch. 8.)

"Open thine eyes, and look at what I am:
Thou hast beheld such things, that strong enough
Hast thou become to tolerate my smile."
Par., 23, 46.)

For the *eyes* of Beatrice, see also *Purg.*, 30. 64; 27. 54. Also *Par.*, 4. 140; 18. 55; 22. 154; 28. 11. For her *smile*, *Par.*, 21. 4; 23. 47, 60; 27. 104; 29. 7; 30. 25; 31. 92. It will be noticed that whenever Beatrice *smiles*, she proceeds to explain something to her disciple. Pederzini thinks that the difference between *demonstration* and *persuasion* lies chiefly in the fact that the former convinces the intellect, while the latter appeals to the heart. Giuliani points out that both in the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio* Dante is called upon to fix his attention upon the *eyes* of Virgil. In the *Vita Nuova*, § 19, Dante says, "The eyes are the beginning of love, the mouth is the end of love;" and in § 21 he speaks of "the two acts of her mouth, one whereof is her most sweet speech, and the other her marvellous smile."

[2] "I saw the Lady, who erewhile appeared
Veiled, underneath the angels' rain of flowers."
(*Purg.*, 30. 64.)

"Whose head certain ladies appeared to be covering with a white veil" (*Vita Nuova*, § 23). The words in the original are "*nelle quali* [*persuasioni*] *si dimostra la luce interiore della sapienzia sotto alcuno velamento.*" I cannot help believing (in spite of the commentators, who say that there is no *positive* example of the use of *alcuno* in the sense of the French *aucun*) that this sentence should be translated "shines *without any* veil." To explain this as Pederzini does (and the others follow him) by saying that truth shines in upon the mind through a veil, that the soul may not be dazzled, appears to me absurd. The spiritual intuition of which Dante spoke is that which comes directly to us without any medium—"that Divine science . . . that enables us

that highest pleasure of beatitude which is the greatest joy of Paradise.[1] This pleasure can exist in nothing here below but in looking upon these eyes and this smile. And the reason is this—that as everything by nature desires its own perfection, without this it cannot be content, that is, blest; for man, whatever other things he may possess, without this would be filled with a desire which cannot co-exist with blessedness,[2]

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perfectly to see the Truth in which our soul finds rest." The *persuasions* of Wisdom are her *smile*, and Dante did not see the smile of Beatrice till she *unveiled* herself, that he might see the *second* beauty that she had concealed (*Purg.*, 31. 138). So in 1 Cor. xiii. 12, St. Paul says, "Now we see through a glass darkly, then face to face," because "when that which is *perfect* is come, then that which is *in part* shall be done away." The only place in the *Commedia* where Dante seems to have used the word *alcuno* in the sense of "none," is in the forty-second line of the third canto of the *Inferno*, where Longfellow agrees with me in reading "none" instead of "some."

"For glory *none* the damned would have from them."

Origena says, "Above reason is vision, which alone can give pure knowledge. A pure idea is a *theophany*, a manifestation of God in the human soul."

If we look at *Purg.*, 31. 109, we find that the cardinal virtues (see note to *Conv.*, iii. 14) lead Dante to the *eyes* of Beatrice—"before the emeralds have we stationed thee," they say, and the poet "fastened his eyes upon those eyes reluctant" (l. 119). Then the three theological virtues beg her to unveil her face and show to him her *second* beauty, and he sees her "holy smile" (32. 5), apostrophizing her as the "splendour of the living Light eternal," wherein, as Barlow justly observes, Dante but repeats Solomon's description of Wisdom, "She is the brightness of the everlasting Light" (Wisd. vii. 26). The *eyes* of Beatrice were seen through her veil, but her *smile* came unimpeded to the soul of her worshipper.

[1] "The Truth, in which all intellect finds rest."
(*Par.*, 28. 108.)

"That Divine science . . . that enables us perfectly to see the Truth in which our soul finds rest" (*Conv.*, ii. 15). And in the *Vita Nuova*, § 18, Dante speaks of the salute of his lady as "that beatitude which was the *end* of all my desires" (see *Conv.*, ii. 5; iii. 13; iv. 22, etc.).

[2] "O life made up alone of love and peace!
O wealth of happiness without desire!"
(*Par.* 27. 8.)

because blessedness is a perfect thing and desire an imperfect, seeing that no one desires that which he has, but that which he has not, and here is a manifest defect. And in this gaze [or contemplation] alone is human perfection to be gained, that is, the perfection of the reason, on which, as on its most important part, all our being depends; and all our other actions, feelings, nourishment, all exist for it alone, and it exists for itself and not for others.[1] So that if this be perfect, the other [human nature] is so far perfect that man, in so far as he is man, sees all his desires fulfilled, and thus is blest. And therefore it says in the Book of Wisdom,[2] "Whoso casteth away wisdom and knowledge, he is unhappy;" that is to say, he is deprived of happiness. By association with Wisdom it follows that we gain happiness and content, according to the opinion of the Philosopher. Whence we see how the joys of Paradise appear in this lady's face, and therefore we read in the Book of Wisdom[3] already quoted, speaking of her, "She is the brightness of the everlasting Light,[4] the unspotted mirror of the majesty of God."

3. Then when it says, "*Their brightness overpowers our intellect*," I excuse myself, by saying that I can say little of these [her beauties] because they are so overpowering. Here we must observe that these things in a manner dazzle the intellect, in so far as

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[1] See note 6 to par. 3 of preceding chapter.

[2] Wisd. iii. 11, "For whoso despiseth wisdom and *nurture* he is miserable."

[3] Wisd. vii. 26.

[4] "O splendour of the eternal, living Light!" (*Purg.*, 31. 139.)

certain things are asserted to exist which our intellect cannot contemplate, that is, God, and eternity, and primitive matter,[1] which most certainly cannot be seen, and with all faith are believed in. And even those things that are [seen] we cannot understand, and only by negation[2] can we come to know these things, and in no other way.

4. Verily some may here have great doubts as to how Wisdom can make man blest, not being able to show him certain things perfectly; since it is the natural desire of man to know, and without the fulfilment of this desire he cannot be blest. To which it may be answered that the natural desire of everything is regulated according to the capacity of the thing desiring;[3] otherwise it would oppose itself, which is impossible, and nature would have made it in vain, which is also impossible.[4] It would oppose itself, because in desiring its perfection it would thus desire its imperfection; because it would desire to be always desiring, and never to fulfil its desire. And into this error falls the accursed miser, and does not perceive that he desires for himself a perpetual desire, falling always short of a number that it is impossible

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[1] Giuliani says, "We should like to read here: '*we* assert certain causes to exist which our intellect cannot contemplate, that is, God, and the separated substances, and primitive matter.'" And he recalls here ch. 8, par. 8, of this book.

[2] Only by the negative method, as Tasso says, "Primitive matter has no activity, nor can it be known of itself; nor can we say what it is, but rather what it is not."

[3] Some texts have, "the possibility of the thing desired;" but this does not agree with what Dante says elsewhere (see *Conv.*, iii. 4, par. 7; and *De Mon.*, ii. 7, "Nature orders things with respect to their faculties").

[4] "God and nature make nothing in vain" (Ibid., i. 4).

to arrive at.[1] And nature would have made it in vain, because it would have been created without any end; and therefore human desire is proportioned in this life to the knowledge possible to be acquired here;[2] and this limit is not exceeded except through an error, which is outside of nature's intention.[3] And thus it [desire] is measured out to the angelic natures, and is limited to that proportion of wisdom which the nature of each can apprehend. And this is the reason why the saints have no envy one of another, because each attains the fulfilment of his desire,[4] which desire is proportioned to the nature of his goodness.[5] Wherefore, because to know God and certain other things (that is, to understand what they are) is not possible to our nature, we do not by nature desire this knowledge; and in this way our doubt is solved.[6]

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[1] "Accursed may'st thou be, thou old she-wolf,
That hast more prey than all the other beasts,
Because of thine insatiable hunger!"
(*Purg.*, 20. 10.)

"They that hoarded up silver and gold wherein men trust, and made no end of their getting" (Baruch iii. 17). "The love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. vi. 10). And see Canzone 18, Ed. Frat.

[2] "Seek not out the things that are too hard for thee, neither search the things that are above thy strength."

[3] Pederzini reads, "outside of *his* natural intention."

[4] "'Tis essential to this blest existence
To keep itself within the will Divine,
Whereby our very wishes are made one."
(*Par.*, 3. 79.)

"There perfect is, and ripened, and complete,
Every desire."
(*Par.*, 22. 64.)

[5] "Brother, our will is quieted by virtue
Of charity, that makes us wish alone
For what we have, nor gives us thirst for more."
(*Par.*, 3. 70.)

[6] This is Giuliani's reading of a very corrupt passage. Fraticelli

5. Then when I say, "*Her beauty raineth little flames of fire*," I descend to another joy of Paradise, that is to say, to that secondary felicity which follows the first one proceeding from her beauty. Here we must know that morality is the *beauty* of Philosophy; because as the beauty of the body results from the proper ordering of its members,[1] so the beauty of Wisdom (which is the body of Philosophy, as has been said)[2] results from that ordering of the moral virtues which makes us take a sensible delight in it.[3] And therefore I say that *her beauty*, that is, morality, *rains little flames of fire*, that is, a righteous desire, inspired by the pleasure of moral teaching; which desire separates us from the natural vices as well as from the others. And hence is born this felicity,[4] which Aristotle defines in the first of the *Ethics*, saying that it is action, according to virtue, in the perfect life.[5]

6. And when I say, "*Whence, if a lady hear her*

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reads (on the authority of the *Cod. Ricc.*), "certain other things like eternity and primitive matter." Witte reads, "to know God and other things for what they are."

[1] *Conv.*, i. 5, par. 5.

[2] Barlow, in his *Contributions to the Study of the "Divina Commedia,"* p. 386, says that "here we have the meaning of *Purg.*, 31. 49–51—

'Never to thee presented art or nature
Pleasure so great as the *fair limbs* wherein
I was inclosed, which scattered are in earth.'

The verbal members of Divine Wisdom perish with the using, but the substance of Divine Wisdom abideth for ever." Giuliani makes the same reference.

[3] By clothing it with a body, and making it perceptible by us.

[4] "Hence the ineffable providence of God proposes to man two ends: one, the beatitude of this life, which consists in virtuous action" (*De Mon.*, iii. 15).

[5] "Happiness is a certain activity of the soul, according to perfect virtue" (*Ethics*, i. 13).

beauty blamed," I go on with this lady's praise. I cry to the people to follow her, telling them of her benefits, that is, that by following her all become good. Therefore I say, let that *lady*, that is, that *soul*, that hears her beauty blamed for not appearing as it should appear, look at this example. Here we must observe that deeds[1] are the beauty of the soul, that is, the virtues above all, which sometimes, through [our] vanity or pride, become less beautiful or less attractive,[2] as we shall see in the last book. And therefore I say, that to avoid this, let them look at her, that is, where she is the example of humility,[3] that is, in that part of her which is called Moral Philosophy. And I add that, looking upon that part of her (that is, of Wisdom), every wicked one will become righteous and good.[4] And therefore I say,

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[1] The word *costumi* (generally "manners" or "customs") is here used as in *Par.*, 23. 114—

"In the very breath of God, and in His *deeds*;"

and in *Par.*, 32. 73—

"Without, then, any merit of their *deeds*."

[2] This is why (says Giuliani) Dante, being absorbed in terrestrial affairs, and the pride of life, thought less of Beatrice when she,

"With all the pleasure of her perfect beauty,
Going away from our bereaved sight,
Became of spiritual beauty rare."

(*Vita Nuova*, § 34.)

Here Dante gives *Pride* as the subject of his last book; in book i. he says it is to be "why things prayed for are so costly."

[3] "She goeth on her way, hearing her praise,
Benignly clothed in sweet humility."

(*Vita Nuova*, § 26.)

"The sight of her fills all with humbleness,
And not alone makes her a lovely thing,
But all who look on her are honoured too."

(Ibid., § 27.)

[4] See third stanza of first canzone of *Vita Nuova*, Appendix to *Conv.*, iii. 1.

"*For this is she who humbles the perverse*," that is, who gently turns back those who have been perverted from the right way.[1]

7. Finally, as the highest praise of Wisdom, I say that she is the mother of every principle, saying that [in conjunction] with her God began the world, and especially the movement of the heavens, by which all things are generated, and from which all motion takes its origin and impulse,[2] saying, "*She was the thought of Him who moves the worlds;*" that is to say, that she was in the Divine Thought or Intellect when the world was made.[3] Whence it follows that she made it; and therefore Solomon says in one of his Proverbs, speaking in the person of Wisdom, "When He prepared the heavens, I was there; when with a law and a circle He entrenched the abysses; when He established the æther above, and balanced the fountains of the waters; when He marked out its limits for the sea, and gave laws to the waters that they should not exceed their bounds; when He appointed the foundations of the earth; then was I with Him, disposing of all things, and rejoicing in every day."[4]

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[1] "Your ways are not as My ways" (Isa. lv. 8).

"That thou may'st recognize, she said, the school
Which thou hast followed, and may'st see how far
Its doctrine follows after my discourse."
(*Purg.*, 33. 85.)

[2] "That motion, which keeps quiet
The centre, and all the rest about it moves,
From here begins as from its starting-point."
(*Par.*, 27. 106.)

"The heavens your movements do initiate."
(*Purg.*, 16. 73.)

[3] "Wisdom was with Thee. . . . and wast present when Thou madest the world" (Wisd. ix. 9).

[4] Prov. viii. 27–30. The English version differs in many particulars.

8. O ye, worse than the dead, who fly from her friendship! open your eyes, and see that before ye were, she was your friend, and ordered and prepared the process of your being;[1] and after ye were created, to direct ye aright, came to ye in your own likeness![2] And if all are not able to come into her presence, honour her in her friends, and follow their commandments, as of them who announce to ye the will of this eternal Empress![3] Nor shut your ears to Solomon, who says to ye, "The way of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the day of their beatitude;"[4] going after them, witnessing their works, that should be to ye a light upon the path of this most brief life![5] And here may end the true meaning of this canzone.[6]

9. For, indeed, the last verse, which is placed as the *Tornata* [*l'envoy*], can be easily explained by the literal exposition, except in so far as it says that I here call this lady *cruel* and *disdainful.* Here we must observe that in the beginning Philosophy appeared to

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[1] From nonentity to existence.

[2] "Seemed to me painted with our effigy."
(*Par.*, 33. 131.)

"The wisdom and omnipotence
That oped the thoroughfares 'twixt heaven and earth."
(*Par.* 23. 37.)

"Here Wisdom is identified with Christ, as in the preceding chapter with the Logos. So in the *Commedia* we find Beatrice many times identified with Christ, either directly or indirectly (see especially *L'Ottimo Commento*).

[3] See *Conv.*, ii. 16; iii. 12.

[4] Prov. iv. 18. "The *perfect day*" in the English version.

[5] "The lilies
By whose sweet scent the good way was discovered."
(*Par.*, 23. 74.)

[6] The true or allegorical meaning (see end of ch. 10).

me *cruel*, as far as her body (that is, Wisdom) was concerned, because she did not *smile* upon me, inasmuch as I did not yet understand her persuasions; and *disdainful*,[1] because she did not turn her *eyes* upon me, that is, I could not yet see her *demonstrations*. And in all this the fault was mine; and by this [explanation], and by that given in the literal exposition, the allegory of the *Tornata* is explained; so that it is time, in order that we may proceed further, to put an end to this book.

[1] "In attitude still royally disdainful."
(*Purg.*, 30. 70.)

BOOK IV.

CANZONE III.

1.

THE dulcet rhymes of Love, that I was wont
To seek out in my thoughts,
I now must leave; not that I do not hope
To come to them again,
But that most cruel and disdainful mien
At times my Lady fair
Hath taken on, hath closed to me the way
Of my accustomed speech.
And since it seems the time has come to wait,[1]
Here will I now lay down that dulcet style
Which once of old I held, to treat of Love,
And of that virtue sing
(Which makes the true nobility of man)
In harsh and subtle rhyme;
Refuting the decision false and base
Of those who say that this nobility
In riches hath its source.
And to begin, I call upon that Lord [2]
Who dwelleth ever in my Lady's eyes,
That she may be enamoured of herself.

2.

There reigned an emperor,[3] who once maintained
Nobility to be

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[1] "They also serve who only stand and wait."
(Milton.)

[2] *Truth*, "who dwells in the eyes, that is, the demonstrations, of Philosophy" (*Conv.*, iv. 2, par. 8).

[3] Frederic of Swabia (1212–1250), Emperor of the Romans (see ch. 3, par. 3).

Holding possession of most ancient wealth,
With gentle breeding.
Another, knowing less,
Reversed his saying,
Dropping the last half;
Perchance because he had it not himself.
And after this one, comes the crowd of those
Who make all families of noble rank
That long have held possession of great wealth.
And now so long has reigned
This very false opinion among men,
That one is wont to call
Him noble who can say, "I was the son
Or grandson of a truly noble man,"
Though he himself were worthless.
But vilest he (to him who sees the truth)
Who being shown the way, strays from the path,[1]
And being as one dead, still walks the earth.[2]

3.

He who defines man as a living plant,
First says what is not true,
And after falsehood, tells but half a truth;[3]
Perchance could see no more.
And likewise he who wore the Imperial crown,
Failed to define the word,
For his first text was false, and even the last
He failed to make complete.
For never riches, as by some believed,
Can give nobility, or take away;
Being of their own nature most degraded.
And never painter could a figure draw
But out of his own soul;[4]
Nor bends an upright tower[5]
Before a stream that runneth far away.

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[1] That is, he who fails to follow in the footsteps of his noble ancestors (see ch. 7, par. 5).

[2] Dead to right living (ch. 7, par. 6; see *Inf.*, 33. 156).

[3] It is *false*, because man is not a plant, and but *half a truth*, because to *living* is not added *reasoning*, man's proper function (see ch. 10, par. 3).

[4] See ch. 10, par. 6.

[5] "Like to some steadfast tower, that never bends
Its top before the blowing of the winds."
(*Purg.*, 5. 14.)

(And see ch. 10, par. 7; 13, par. 6.)

Riches are vile, we see, and most imperfect;
For who amasses them,
Gains not content, but only greater greed.[1]
Wherefore the mind that upright is, and true,
Is not disquieted when they have fled.

4.

Nor will they[2] admit that a man, lowly born,
A noble can become; nor yet, again,
From baseborn father spring a noble race.
This is by them maintained,
Wherein their text seems to confute itself;
Seeing that it puts forth
Time as an element of nobility,
Defining it thereby.
And thus it comes, from what I've said before,
That we are all of base or noble rank,
Or more than one beginning had mankind.[3]
This is not my belief.
Nor is it theirs, if they still are Christians;
Because, to the healthy mind,
'Tis manifest these words of theirs are vain.
And thus I brand them false,
And from them I withdraw.
And now I wish to say, after my thought,
What is nobility, and whence it comes,
And tell the signs that mark the noble man.

5.

I say that all the virtues take their rise
From one sole root;
That primal Virtue, which makes mankind blest
In acting it.
Which is, as in the *Ethics* we may read,
The elective habit[4]
Which ever holds the middle way in life,
And so adjusts its speech.[5]

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[1] See ch. 12, par. 1.

[2] The false reasoners of ver. 2.

[3] Because if certain families were *always* noble, either we are *all* noble, or else mankind could not have had one common ancestor (see ch. 15, par. 2).

[4] See ch. 17, par. 1; 20, par. 1; and *Ethics*, ii. 1.

[5] Fraticelli implies that this should read, "as these words assert," referring to the quotation "*in medio consistit virtus.*" The original

I say, then, that nobility perforce
Implies the good existing in its subject,
As baseness ever shows the evil there.
And moral virtue
Gives ever the same witness of the good;
Because in all they say
The two agree, having but one effect.[1]
Whence it behoves from the one comes the other
Or both come from a third;
But if the one were worth all of the other
Or even more, rather were it the source;
And all I have said here is presupposed.[2]

6.

Nobility exists where Virtue dwells,
Not Virtue where she is;
As that is heaven where we see the stars,[3]
But not the converse.
And we in women, and the age of youth
See this most saving power
Part of their fear of shame,
Which is not quite a virtue.[4]
Therefore from her, as cometh perse from black,[5]
All virtues take their rise;
Or rather their first parent, as I said.
But let none make his boast,
Saying, "By race I too belong to her;"
For they are almost gods
Who have this grace, apart from all the vile.

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has "*E tali parole pone*," literally, "And such words puts." The verb should have "the elective habit" for its subject, when it would signify that that habit chooses the middle way in life and so in speech; or it refers to the *Ethics* (which seems impossible), and means as they (or their writer) say.

[1] See ch. 18, par. 1.

[2] That is, has been sufficiently developed by the preceding argument.

[3] Fraticelli reads "the sun" (see note to par. 5, ch. 9, book iii.).

[4] "Not a virtue, but right feeling" (ch. 20).

[5] "A colour composed of purple and black where the black predominates" (ch. 20). "The water was more sombre far than *perse*" (*Inf.*, 7. 103). And in *Inf.*, 5. 89, it is used as *sombre*. In *Purg.*, 9. 97, we have "The second, tinct of deeper hue than *perse*." Louis Blanc, in his *Vocabolario Dantesco*, says it is perhaps derived from the Greek *persicos*, and means dark blue inclining to black. In the mystic language of colours, dark blue and black are said to have the same meaning.

For God alone doth give it to that soul
He sees in all its being
Perfectly fitted for it; so but few
Can call that seed of happiness their own
That God doth plant in the well-fitted soul.

7.

The soul that this high virtue doth adorn,
Doth keep it not concealed;
For from the moment that she weds the body
She shows it until death.
Obedient, gracious, full of noble shame,
She holds her early way,
And even the body she makes beautiful,
And all its limbs alert.
In years of youth, most temperate and strong,
Full of affection and of courteous praise,
Finding delight in lawful joys alone.
And in her later age,
Prudent and just and liberal to all;
Rejoicing in herself
To hear and speak of all that serveth man.
Then in the fourth and last part of her life,
Weds her again to God,
Contemplating the end for which she waits,
And blessing the past years.[1]
Behold ye, now, how many are deceived![2]

8.

Against these erring ones, canzone, go;
And when thou shalt have come
Unto that place wherein our Lady dwells,
Keep not thy message hid from her, I pray;
Thou well may'st tell it her!
I go to speak to all men of thy friend.[3]

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[1] Dante here defines the four ages of man (see chs. 23–28).
[2] "O ye who have listened to me, behold how many are deceived" (ch 29, par. 1). This line properly belongs to the next verse.
[3] Philosophy (see ch. 30, par. 6).

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY

Chapter I.

1. Love, according to the unanimous opinion of the wise men who have reasoned thereon, and according to our continual experience, is that which brings together and unites the lover and the person beloved.[1] Wherefore Pythagoras says, "Friendship makes one out of many."[2] And because those things which are united naturally communicate their properties to each other, so it sometimes happens that they completely change natures, and the passions of the beloved enter into the person of the lover, and the love of the one is imparted to the other,[3] as well as hate and desire, and all the other passions. Because the friends of the one are beloved by the other, and his enemies hated, therefore it is said in the Greek proverb, "Friends should have everything in common."[4] Whence I, having become the friend of this lady,[5] who was named in the true [*i.e.* allegorical]

[1] "Even as the fire doth upward move
. . . . . .
So comes the captive soul into desire,
Which is a motion spiritual, and ne'er rests
Until she doth enjoy the thing beloved."
(*Purg.*, 18. 28–33.)

And see *Conv.*, iii. 2, "Love is the spiritual union of the soul and the thing beloved."

[2] "Pythagoras considers it the chief end of friendship that the many become one" (Cicero, *Offices*, i. 17).

[3] "Those desires of mine
Which led thee to the loving of that good
Beyond which there is nothing to aspire to."
(*Purg.*, 31. 22.)

[4] "In the Greek proverb, 'All things amongst friends are to be in common'" (Cicero, *Offices*, i. 16).

[5] "With love and devotion to this most noble lady, Philosophy" (*Conv.*, ii. 16).

exposition before given, began to love and to hate according to her love and hatred. Therefore I began to love the followers of the truth, and to hate the followers of error and falsehood as she does.

2. But because all things should be loved for themselves, and none should be hated save on account of superadded wickedness,[1] it is right and proper not to hate the things themselves, but the wickedness in them, which we should try to separate therefrom. And if any person understand this, my most excellent lady understands it particularly well (that is, how to separate the wickedness, which is the cause of hate, from the things themselves), because she is all reason, and in her is the source of right-doing. I, following her actively as well as passively, as far as I could, abominated and despised the errors of mankind, to the infamy and shame, not of the erring ones, but of the errors; which, by blaming, I believed I rendered displeasing, and, having rendered displeasing, separated from them who on their account were hated by me.

3. Among these errors, I particularly blamed one, which, because it is not only hurtful and dangerous to those who remain in it, but also to those others

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[1] *Sopravenimento*, the word I have translated "superadded," in the language of to-day means "something unexpected;" but Dante seems to use it in the more Latin sense of something *superimposed*, especially as he goes on to speak of wickedness as if not inherent in things, but to be separated from them.

> "Of every malice that wins hate in heaven,
> Injury is the end."
>
> (*Inf.*, II. 22.)

Here Dante seems to refer to that special form of wickedness with intent to injure others which we call *malice*. In Italian the word is the same for both senses.

who condemn it, I seek to remove from them and condemn. This is the error about human worth,[1] in so far as it is implanted in us by nature, and ought to be called Nobility; which [error], by evil custom and for want of understanding, has been so strengthened that almost all have a false opinion about it [*i.e.* of Nobility]; and from false opinions spring false judgments,[2] and from false judgments, unjust respect and unjust contempt; so that the good have been held in low esteem, and the wicked honoured and exalted.[3] Which was the worst confusion in the world, as he can see who will subtly consider what may result therefrom. And since this my lady had somewhat altered her sweet demeanour towards me[4] (especially when I sought to find out if the first matter of the elements were created[5] by God), for

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[1] That is, the mistaken idea of making the value of a man depend upon his riches or his birth.

[2] "Because it happens that most often bends
Hasty opinion in the wrong direction,
And then self-love shackles the intellect."

(Reading of Scartazzini of *Par.*, 13. 118, to which he adds, from Democritus, "The love which we put into our false judgments shackles and occupies the intellect, so that it cannot see the truth.")

[3] "Trampling the good, exalting the depraved."
(*Inf.*, 19. 105.)

[4] See end of ch. 15, book iii., and note. And *Vita Nuova*, § 10, "This most noble lady, who was the destroyer of all the vices and the queen of the virtues, passing by me in a certain place, denied me her most sweet salutation, in which lay all my beatitude."

[5] Whether primitive matter were created or eternal. The word translated "created," in the original is *intesa*, "thought" or "intended," often used by the writers of Dante's time in the sense of "created," as being an act of the Divine *Intelligence*. See *Par.*, 29. 22, where Dante seems to have resolved this doubt—

"Matter and form, unmingled, and conjoined,
Came into being that had no defect,
As from a three-stringed bow three arrows come."

this reason I restrained[1] myself a little from frequenting her presence, and, remaining almost apart from her, began to dwell in my thoughts upon human deficiency in respect to this error.[2] And to avoid idleness, which is supremely hateful to my lady, and to extinguish this error, which has deprived her of so many friends, I proposed to cry out to those who were taking the wrong road, that they might direct their steps into the right way; and I began a canzone, in the beginning of which I said, "*The dulcet rhymes of Love, that I was wont*," etc. And in this I intend to lead people into the right way as to the proper knowledge of true Nobility, as will be seen by a knowledge of its [the canzone's] text, with the explanation of which we are now concerned. And because in this canzone we have to do with such a necessary remedy, it is best not to use any figure whatsoever, but to prepare this medicine quickly, so that health may be at once restored, which, having been corrupted, was hurrying to so horrible a death.

4. Therefore it will not be necessary, in explaining this canzone, to open up any allegory, but only to discuss its meaning according to the letter. By *my lady* I always mean the one who is treated of in the preceding canzone, that is, Philosophy, that most powerful light[3] whose rays make the flowers of the

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[1] *Sostenni* in the original; here used in the sense of "restrained," as in *Inf.*, 26. 72.

[2] As to the true nature of nobility.

[3] In *Par.*, iii. 1, the same metaphor is applied to Beatrice—

"That sun which first with love my bosom warmed,
The aspect sweet had unto me unveiled,
By proof and confutation, of fair Truth."

Comp. Dan. xii. 3, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of

true Nobility of man to put forth new leaves and to bear fruit; and of this [true Nobility] the present canzone intends to treat in full.

CHAPTER II.

1. IN beginning the explanation now undertaken, it will be best first to divide the aforesaid canzone into two parts, in order that its meaning may be more easily understood; because the first part is written as an introduction, and in the second the subject [of this Book] is continued. And the second part begins with the beginning of the second verse, where it says, "*There was an emperor, who once maintained.*"

2. The first part, again, may be understood in three divisions. In the first it says why I have given up my usual style; in the second, I tell of what it is my intention to treat; in the third, I demand help from that which can help me best, that is, truth. The second division begins, "*And since it seems the time has come to wait.*" The third begins, "*And to begin, I call upon that Lord.*"

3. I say, then, that it behoves me to lay aside the sweet rhymes of love that my thoughts were wont to seek for,[1] and I assign the cause of this when I say that it is not because of an intention never again to make rhymes about love, but because my lady has

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the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever;" and Matt. xiii. 43, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

[1] Dante speaks of his lyrics as "sweet rhymes of love," in Sonnet 20, Ed. Frat.; and in *Purg.*, 24. 57, of "the sweet new style."

presented herself to me under a new aspect, which has deprived me of material for present speech of love. Here be it known that this lady's actions are not called here *cruel* and *disdainful*, except in appearance, as may be seen in the tenth chapter of the preceding Book; as at another time[1] I say that the appearance differs from the reality. And how it may be that the same thing can be sweet and seem bitter, or can be light and seem dark, may be sufficiently seen in that place.

4. Afterwards, when I say, "*And since it seems the time has come to wait*," I declare, as has been said, of what it is my intention to treat. And we are not to pass over lightly what is said about *a time to wait*, because it is a most powerful cause of my action; but we must observe how reasonable it is to wait for the proper time in all our actions, and above all, in speech. Time, according to the saying of Aristotle in the fourth book of the *Physics*, is number of motion, as *first*, and so on;[2] and number of celestial motion, which prepares things here below to receive differently any influence; because the earth, in the beginning of spring, is prepared in a different way to receive the influence that produces plants and flowers[3] from what it is in winter; and one season is differently disposed to receive seed from another. And so our mind (in so far as it is formed according to the

[1] In the ninth chapter.

[2] "For neither *after* nor *before* proceeded
The going forth of God upon these waters."
(*Par.*, 29. 20.)

[3] "Behold the grass, the flow'rets, and the shrubs,
Which of itself alone this land produces."
(*Purg.*, 27. 134.)

temperament of the body, which depends upon the movements of the heavens[1]) is differently disposed at one time from another. Therefore our words, which are, as it were, the seeds of action,[2] should be very discreetly held back or sent forth, both that they may be well received and become fruitful, and also that on their part there may be no defect of barrenness. And therefore the [proper] time should be chosen, for the sake of him who speaks, as well as for him who has to listen; because, if the speaker be not well disposed, his words will generally be harmful; and if the hearer be not well disposed, even good words will be badly received. And therefore Solomon says in Ecclesiastes,[3] "There is a time to speak, and a time to be silent." Wherefore I, feeling within me (for the reason given in the preceding chapter) a disposition disturbed from thoughts of love, it seemed to me that I should wait for Time, who brings with him the end of all desires, and presents himself, as it were, as a benefactor to them who do not weary of waiting for him. Wherefore St. James the Apostle says, in the fifth chapter of his Epistle, "Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and waiteth patiently, until he receive the early and the late."[4] For all our troubles, if we try to

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[1] "As far as
By its potential temperament attracts
The ray and motion of the holy lights."
(*Par.*, 7. 140.)

[2] "If my words may be the seed."
(*Inf.*, 33. 7.)
In the *Teachings of the Ancients*, xi. 2, we read, "A good speaker has human wills in his power" (Pederzini).

[3] Eccles. iii. 7.

[4] In the English version, instead of "the early and late *fruit*," we have

discover their real beginnings, come, as it were, from not knowing the use of time.[1]

5. I say, since it seems to me *the time to wait*, that I will *lay down*, that is, abandon, my *dulcet style*, that is, the manner I had adopted in speaking of love; and I intend to speak of that *virtue* which makes man truly noble. And since *virtue* has many meanings, here it is to be understood almost as the potentiality of Nature, or rather the goodness bestowed by her, as will be seen hereafter. And I propose to treat of this matter in *harsh and subtle rhyme*.[2]

6. Here we should notice that *rhyme* may be understood in two ways; that is, strictly speaking, and speaking in general. Strictly speaking, it means that correspondence of the ultimate and penultimate syllables which it is customary to use; generally speaking, it means any speech which, regulated by number and time, falls into rhythmic consonance; and in this way it is intended that it should be understood in this prelude. And therefore it says *harsh*, as regards the sound of the words, for it is not fitting that they should be dulcet when dealing with such matter; and it says *subtle* as regards the meaning of the words, which proceed to subtly argue and discuss.

"the early and the latter *rain*" (James v. 7). *Serotina*, literally, "of the evening" ("Confronted by his shining *evening* rays," *Purg.*, 15. 141), is much used by the Tuscans, in the sense of *late* or *backward*, as applied to fruit (Giuliani).

[1] "For to lose time irks him most who most knows."
(*Purg.*, 3. 78.)
"Think that this day will never dawn again."
(*Purg.*, 12. 84.)
(Comp. 2 Cor. vi. 2.)

[2] "If I had rhymes both harsh and stridulent."
(*Inf.*, 32. 1.)

7. And I add, "*Refuting the decision false and base,*" where it promises again to refute the judgment of those who are full of error; *false*, that is, far from true; and *base*, that is, strengthened and confirmed by baseness of soul. And it must be observed that this prelude proposes first to treat of the true, and then to correct the false; and in the treatise the opposite is done; for first the false is corrected, and then the true is treated, which does not seem in accordance with the promise. And therefore we should notice that although both are intended, it is intended principally to treat of the true, and to refute the false in so far as so doing will make the truth more apparent. And here it proposes in the first place to treat of the true as its principal subject, which inspires the souls of its hearers with the desire to listen; whereas in the treatise we first refute the false, in order that, false opinions being dispelled, the truth may be more liberally received. And this method was used by the master of human reason, Aristotle, who always in the first place combated the adversaries of truth, and then, these conquered, demonstrated that truth.

8. Finally, when I say, "*And to begin, I call upon that Lord,*" I call upon Truth, that it may be with me, Truth being that Lord who dwells in the eyes, that is, the demonstrations, of Philosophy. And well may Truth be called Lord; for, being espoused thereto, the soul is a sovereign lady, but otherwise a servant, deprived of all liberty.

9. And it says, "*That she may be enamoured of herself,*" because Philosophy, who is (as has been said in the previous book) the loving use of Wisdom, gazes

upon herself when the beauty of her eyes appears to her.[1] And what does this mean, if not that the soul, absorbed in philosophy, not only contemplates the truth, but also contemplates its own contemplation and the beauty thereof, returning upon itself and becoming enamoured of itself through the beauty of its own looks?

10. And thus ends that which serves as a prelude, in three parts, to the text of the present book.

CHAPTER III.

1. HAVING seen the meaning of the prelude, we have now to go on with the treatise itself, and, the better to explain this, it behoves us to divide it into its principal parts, which are three; because in the first, Nobility is treated according to the opinions of others; in the second it is treated according to the correct opinion; and in the third the canzone is addressed, by way of ornament to that which has been said. The second part begins, "*I say that every virtue takes its rise.*" The third begins, "*Against these erring ones, Canzone, go.*" And after this general division it is best to make others, for the better understanding of the meaning which is intended to be conveyed. Therefore let no one wonder if we proceed by many divisions, because we have now in hand a great and lofty work, and one little studied by [other]

[1] "To see her beauteous eyes as eager is she,
As I am to adorn me with my hands."
(*Purg.*, 27. 106.)
Here we have the contemplative life of Rachel, as opposed to the active life of Leah, well explained by this passage of the *Convito*.

authors; and therefore the book upon which I have now entered must needs be long and difficult, to unravel the text perfectly, according to the meaning which it bears.

2. I say, then, that this first part may be again divided in two; because in the first the opinions of others are stated, and in the second they are refuted; and this second part begins, "*He who defines man as a living plant.*"

Again, the remaining first part has two members: the first is the definition of the Emperor's opinion; the second is the variation thereof in the opinion of the vulgar, which is devoid of all reason; and this begins, "*Another, knowing less.*"

3. I say, then, "*There reigned an emperor,*" that is, one who held the imperial office. For we must know that Frederic of Swabia, the last[1] emperor of the Romans (last, I say, as regards this present time, notwithstanding that Rudolph and Adolphus and Albert were elected after his death and from among his descendants), being asked what Nobility was, answered that it was ancient riches and gentle breeding. And I say that another knew still less, who, considering and turning over this definition on every side, left off the

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[1] "Dante mentions Frederic II. of Swabia in *Par.*, 3. 130, where he calls him "the third and greatest power," not so much out of regard for the house of Swabia, as on account of his successful maintenance of the imperial dignity" (Giuliani). Giuliani agrees with Scartazzini here in reading *ultimo* as "greatest," instead of "last," as Fraticelli and many others would have it, and I think rightly, though the word is often used by Dante in the former sense. As there is no mention here of Henry VII., who, after the death of Albert (May 1, 1308), was elected emperor (November 27, 1308), though he did not receive the iron crown till 1311, nor exercise the imperial authority till the year after, it seems evident that this part of the *Convito* was written *before* 1308.

last clause, that is, the gentle breeding, and held to the first, that is, the ancient riches; and as the text seems to intimate, perhaps because he had not gentle breeding, but did not wish to lose the name of noble, defined Nobility according to what he had of it, that is, the ancient riches. And I say that this opinion is almost universal, saying that "*After this one comes the crowd of those*" who call others noble because they come of families that have long been rich; since almost all bark thus.[1]

4. These two opinions (although one of them, as has been said, is quite unworthy of notice) seem to be corroborated by two most grave reasons. The first is that, as the Philosopher says, that which appears [true] to the majority cannot be entirely false; the second is the authority of the Emperor's definition. And that the power of truth may be better seen, which conquers all authority, I intend to discuss how far each of these reasons is both power [in itself] and aid [to the truth]. And because, firstly, we can know nothing of imperial authority without tracing out its roots, I intend to do this in a special chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

1. THE radical foundation of imperial majesty according to the truth is the necessity of human society, which is ordained to one end, that is, a happy

[1] This contemptuous expression for vulgar opinion is used in speaking of Bocca degli Abati, *Inf.*, 32. 10; and of Brutus and Cassius in *Par.*, 6. 74, "Brutus and Cassius *bark* in hell together."

life ;[1] to which no one is capable of attaining without the aid of others,[2] because man has many needs, which one person alone is unable to satisfy. And therefore the Philosopher says that man is naturally a social animal.[3] And as a man, for the satisfaction of his needs, demands the domestic companionship of the family, so a house[4] needs a neighbourhood, otherwise it would lack many things, and its happiness would be impaired. And because a neighbourhood is not entirely sufficient to itself, in order to satisfy its needs, the city must exist. Again, the city, for its arts and for its defence, needs a brotherly intercourse with other cities, and therefore the kingdom was formed. Wherefore, as the human mind cannot content itself in the possession of restricted territory, but always desires to acquire glory,[5] as we see by experience, discords and wars must arise between kingdom and kingdom. These bring tribulations upon the cities; and through the cities, upon their neighbourhoods; and through their neighbourhoods, upon families; and through families, upon [the individual] man; and thus happiness is prevented. Wherefore, in order to put an end to these wars and their causes, the whole earth, and all that the human race is permitted to possess, should be under a monarchy, that is, should be a single principality

[1] "The ultimate end of human society is . . . universal peace" (*De Mon.*, i. 3, 6).

[2] "His soul, which is to thine and mine a sister,
In coming upwards, could not come alone."
(*Purg.*, 21. 28.)

[3] *Ethics*, i. 7.

[4] Dante uses "house" in the general sense of "family," as Shakespeare says, "A plague on both your houses" (see *Purg.*, 8. 124; 19. 143).

[5] Giuliani says this should be "more territory."

under one prince,[1] who, possessing everything, and therefore incapable of further desire,[2] would keep the kings content within the limits of their kingdoms, so that peace should abide among them, wherein the cities should repose, and in this repose the neighbourhoods should love one another, and in this love the families should supply all their wants; which done, man lives happily; for which end he was born.[3]

2. And with these reasons we may compare the words of the Philosopher, when he says in the *Politics* that when many things are ordained for one purpose, one of them should be the governor or ruler, and all the others should be governed and ruled.[4] Even as we see in a ship,[5] where her divers duties and their divers purposes are ordained for one sole end, that is, to bring her by a safe course to the desired haven; where, as each officer performs his own duty with regard to its proper end, so there is one person who considers all these, and adapts them all to the final end, and this one is the pilot,[6] whose voice all must obey. And this we see in religious bodies, and in

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[1] The same idea is expressed in *De Mon.*, i. 2, 8.

[2] "The monarch having nothing to desire . . . because his jurisdiction is limited only by the ocean" (Ibid., i. 13).

[3] "Happiness, then, appears something perfect and self-sufficient, being the end of all human actions" (*Ethics*, i. 7).

[4] "This can be shown by most potent and valid arguments, . . . the principle of which is laid down in the *Politics* of Aristotle, where it says that when several things are ordained to one end, one of them should rule and govern, and the others should be ruled and governed" (*De Mon.*, i. 7).

[5] See ch. 5, par. 3.

[6] "Upon the stern stood the celestial Pilot."
(*Purg.*, 2. 43.)

"Ah! servile Italy, grief's hostelry!
A ship without a pilot in great tempest!"
(*Purg.*, 6. 76.)

armies,[1] and in all things, which, as we have said, are ordained for some one purpose. Wherefore we may easily see that to perfect the universal union[2] of the human race, one should be, as it were, a pilot, who, considering the different conditions of the world, and ordering its several and necessary offices, should have over all the universal and unimpeachable authority of commander.[3] And this office, for reason of its excellence, is called *empire*, without any qualification, because it is the government of all governments. And so he who holds this office is called emperor, because he is the governor of all governors,[4] and what he says is a law to all and must be obeyed by all, and all other commands take their force and authority from him. And thus it is evident that the imperial majesty and authority is the highest in human society.

3. Nevertheless, some may demur, saying that though the world may have need of the imperial office, it does not follow that the authority of the Roman prince should be the highest (which we have now to prove), because the Roman power was not

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[1] In *De Mon.*, i. 8, Dante makes a distinction between the duties of soldiers among themselves, and to their captain, who is not one of themselves.

[2] The word in the original is *religione*, which Dante seems to use in the Latin sense of a "tie" or "union." In *Purg.*, 21. 41, "the religion of the mountain," in the sense of the *constitution* of the mountain, or its natural laws, which may be the meaning here. Giuliani refers to "that *bond* of love which nature makes" (*Inf.*, 11. 56).

[3] "Hence it behoved laws for a rein to place,
Behoved a king to have, who, at the least,
Of the true city should discern the tower."
(*Purg.*, 16. 94.)

[4] "One will, which is the lord and governor of all others in one" (*De Mon.*, i. 17).

acquired by reason, nor by decree of a universal convention,[1] but by force, which appears to be contrary to reason. To which it may be readily answered, that the election of this supreme officer should come in the first place from that Council which provides for all, that is, God;[2] otherwise the election would not have been equal [in value] for all, since before the [coming of the] aforesaid officer no one had at heart the good of all.[3]

4. And because a nature more gentle in governing, more powerful in maintaining, and more subtle in acquiring, than that of the Latin people there never was and never will be (as may be seen by experience), and especially that of the holy race in whom is mingled the lofty Trojan blood,[4] therefore God elected them for this office.[5] Wherefore, as it [this office] could not be obtained without the greatest virtue, and needed the greatest and most humane benignity in its exercise, this was the people best fitted for it.[6]

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[1] The word *convento* is used four times in the *Commedia*, once in the sense of a "convent," twice as a "following," and once, as here, in the sense of "assembly" (*Par.*, 30. 129).

[2] "That Providence which governeth the world
With counsel."
(*Par.*, 11. 28.)

[3] Because (as Dante explains in *De Mon.*, i. 13; iii. 5) only the monarch has at heart the universal good, as he who regards the ultimate end of human society.

[4] "The noble seed of the Romans."
(*Inf.*, 26. 60.)
"The Romans, of whom Æneas was father" (*De Mon.*, ii. 7).

[5] "The Roman people were ordained by nature for empire" (Ibid., ii. 7).

[6] "It belonged to a most noble people to be put above all others, and the Roman people were most noble, therefore it belonged to them to be thus preferred" (Ibid., ii. 3). "Loving peace as well as liberty, this holy, pious, and glorious people were seen to have scorned their

Therefore it was not by force that it was assumed in the beginning by the Roman people, but by Divine Providence, which is above all law.[1] And with this Virgil agrees in the first of the *Æneid*,[2] where he says, speaking in the person of God, "To them (that is, to the Romans) I have set no limit of things nor of time; to them have I given an empire without end."

5. Force, then, was not the active cause, as these objectors have thought, but was the instrumental cause; as the blows of the hammer are the [instrumental] cause of the knife, and the soul of the smith is the efficient and active cause; and thus not force but law,[3] and that Divine, was the beginning of the Roman Empire.[4]

6. And that this is so may be seen by two most apparent reasons, which show that city to be the Empress, and to have an especial birth from God, and from God its especial growth. But because this could not be treated in the present chapter without making it too long, and long chapters are enemies to the memory, I will make a digression of another chapter, in order to demonstrate the reasons alluded to, which shall not be without great benefit and pleasure.

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own ease that they might secure the public good of the human race" (*De Mon.*, ii. 5).

[1] "Law is a real and personal relation between man and man" (Ibid., ii. 5). "The Roman people, in subjugating the world, did it according to law, and therefore acquired the empire worthily" (Ibid., ii. 6).

[2] "To them no bounds of empire I assign,
Nor term of years to their immortal line."
(Dryden's trans.)

[3] See note 1, above.

[4] "Behold how great a power has made it worthy
Of reverence, beginning with the hour
When Pallas died to give it sovereignty."
(*Par.*, 6. 34.)

CHAPTER V.

1. IT is no wonder if Divine Providence, which transcends all human and angelic perception, often proceeds in a way mysterious to us;[1] since it often happens that human actions have for men themselves a hidden meaning. But we have reason to wonder greatly, when the execution of the Eternal Counsel proceeds in so manifest a way that our reason can discern it. And therefore in the beginning of this chapter I can speak by the mouth of Solomon, who, in the person of Wisdom, says in his Proverbs,[2] "Hear, for I will speak of excellent things!"

2. The immeasurable Divine Goodness, wishing to bring back to Itself the human creature, which by the sin of the transgression of the first man had become separated from God and unlike Him,[3] it was decreed, in the most high and most united Divine Consistory[4] of the Trinity, that the Son of God

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[1] "That Providence that governeth the world
With counsel, wherein all created vision
Is lost, ere it can penetrate those depths."
(*Par.*, 11. 28.)

"The will of God is of itself invisible; but the invisible things of God are heard and seen by those things which are made by Him" (*De Mon.*, ii. 3). Comp. Rom. xi. 33.

[2] Prov. viii. 6.

[3] "'Tis sin alone that doth disfranchise him,
And render him unlike the Supreme Good."
(*Par.*, 7. 79.)

"The transgression of our first parents was the beginning of all our errors" (*De Mon.*, i. 18).

[4] "When to the high consistory he was wrapt."
(*Purg.*, 9. 24.)

(See note to *Conv.*, ii. 6, par 1.) A consistory is the high council of the Pope and his cardinals.

should descend to earth to bring about this reunion.[1] And since at His coming into the world it behoved not only the heavens, but the earth, to be in the best condition,[2] and the best condition of the earth is under a monarchy (that is, under one prince, as has been said above), therefore Divine Providence ordained the people and the city wherein this should be fulfilled, that is, Rome the glorious.[3] And because the hostelry[4] which the celestial King was to enter should be most pure and most immaculate, a most holy race was ordained, of which, after many worthy ones, was born a woman better than all the rest, who should be the chamber of the Son of God. And this race was that of David, from which was born the confidence[5] and honour of humanity, that is, Mary;

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[1] "Till to descend it pleased the Word of God
Unto that nature, which from its own Maker
Estranged itself, and He to Him in person
Joined by the act of His eternal love."
(*Par.*, 7. 30.)

[2] "The time when Heaven had willed
To bring the whole world to its mood serene."
(*Par.*, 6. 55.)

"We shall never find the world at peace except under Augustus Cæsar, who was the monarch of a perfect monarchy" (*De Mon.*, i. 18).

[3] "This was the place, and this the people—and this is Rome, and her people" (Ibid., ii. 7).

[4] "The womb
Which was the hostelry of our desire."
(*Par.*, 23. 105.)

[5] *Baldezza*, literally "boldness" or "hardihood," is used in the sense of "confidence" in *Par.*, 32. 109, as Scartazzini and Giuliani point out.

"Then I again recourse had to the teaching
Of him who beautified himself in Mary,
As doth the star of morning in the sun.
And he to me: Such *confidence* and grace
As there can be in angel or in soul,
All is in him."
(*Par.*, 32. 106–111.)

and therefore it is written in Isaiah,[1] "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots," and Jesse was the father of the aforesaid David. And it was at one and the same time that David was born and that Rome was born; that is, that Æneas came from Troy[2] into Italy, which was the origin of the most noble city of Rome, as our books bear witness. Thus the Divine election of the Roman Empire is made very evident by the birth of the holy city, which was contemporaneous with that of the root from which sprang the race of Mary.

3. And incidentally we must observe, that since the heavens began to revolve, they were never better disposed than when He who made them and governs them descended from on high; as the mathematicians, by virtue of their art, can again trace out for us. Nor ever was, nor will be, this world so perfectly disposed as then, when it was ruled by the voice of one sole prince and commander of the Roman people, as Luke the Evangelist testifies.[3] And therefore universal peace reigned,[4] which never was before nor ever will be again, because the ship of human society[5] sped over a smooth sea straight to its destined port.

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[1] Isa. xi. 1.

[2] "Son of Anchises, who came forth from Troy,
After that Ilion the superb was burned."
(*Inf.*, i. 74.)

[3] "And there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that *all the world* should be taxed" (Luke ii. 1).

[4] "With him it lapped the world in such great peace,
That Janus had his temple-gates locked fast."
"And then the human race was happy in the tranquillity of universal peace" (*De Mon.*, i. 18).

[5] See *Conv.*, iv. 4; ii. 1.

O ineffable and incomprehensible Wisdom of God! that for Thy advent, at the same hour there in Syria and here in Italy, so long beforehand didst prepare Thyself on high! And oh, most stupid and vile beasts that pasture in the shape of men, and presume to speak against our faith; and profess to know, as ye spin and dig, that which God has ordered with so much forethought![1] Accursed be ye and your presumption, and he who believes in ye!

4. And as we said before, at the end of the preceding chapter, she [Rome] had not only her special origin, but her special growth, from God; for, in short, beginning with Romulus,[2] who was her first father, up to the time of her most perfect age, that is, in the time of the aforesaid emperor,[3] her growth went on, not only by human, but by Divine, influence. For if we consider the seven kings who were her first governors[4]—Romulus, Numa, Tullius, Ancus Martius, Servius Tullius, and the Tarquins, who were, so to speak, the nurses and tutors of her infancy—we shall find in the writings of Roman history, particularly in those of Titus Livius, that these [kings] were of different natures according to the necessities of the moment. If we then consider her greater adolescence (since she was emancipated from her royal tutelage

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[1] "Since I have recognized by most efficacious signs that the founding of the Roman people was ordered by Divine Providence" (see *De Mon.*, ii. 1).

[2] "And Quirinus comes
From sire so vile that he is given to Mars."
(*Par.*, 8. 131.)

[3] Augustus (see note 2, p. 244).

[4] "Seven kings
Conquering the neighbouring nations all around."
(*Par.*, 6. 41.)

under Brutus, the first consul) up to Cæsar, her first supreme prince, we shall find her exalted, not with human, but with divine, citizens;[1] in whom not a human, but a divine, love inspired their love for her; and this could not and should not be, if not for some special purpose intended by God through such celestial infusion. And who will say that it was without Divine inspiration that Fabricius[2] refused an almost infinite amount of gold rather than abandon his country? or that Curius,[3] whom the Samnites tried to corrupt, refused the greatest quantity of gold for love of his country, saying that Roman citizens did not care to possess gold, but the owners of the gold? and that Mutius[4] burned his own hand, because it had failed

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[1] "The consecrated
Seed of those Romans."
(*Inf.*, 15. 76.)

[2] "O good Fabricius,
Virtue with poverty didst thou prefer
To the possession of great wealth with vice."
(*Purg.*, 20. 25).

Caius Fabricius Luscinius was a Roman general (and consul in 282 and 278 B.C.), noted for his poverty and disinterestedness. He refused many bribes from the Samnites and from Pyrrhus, and died so poor that his funeral expenses were paid from the public treasury. Dante mentions him twice in the *De Monarchia*.

[3] M. Curius Dentatus (so called from having been born with *teeth*), after the defeat of Pyrrhus, retired to his farm in the country of the Sabines. When the Samnites sent an embassy to him with rich bribes, they found him roasting turnips, and he rejected their presents with scorn, in the words quoted by Dante. To him Terni owes her famous cascade. He died in the year 270 B.C.

[4] "A perfect will, like that
Which Lawrence fast upon his gridiron held,
And Mutius made so harsh to his own hand."
(*Par.*, 4. 82.)

C. Mutius Cordus, during the siege of Rome by Porsenna, made his way through the enemy's camp to Porsenna's own tent; but having stabbed

to give the blow that he thought would liberate Rome? Who will say that Torquatus,[1] who condemned his son to death for love of the public welfare, would have done it without Divine assistance? and the same with the aforesaid Brutus?[2] Who will say it of the Decii and of the Drusii,[3] who laid down their lives for their country? Who will say of the captive Regulus[4] (who, sent from Carthage to Rome in exchange for Carthaginian prisoners, having finished his embassy, gave counsel against himself and the other Roman captives, for the love of Rome) that he was moved solely by an impulse of human nature?

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by mistake the king's secretary instead of the king, was taken, and, being threatened with death, held his hand over a burning brasier in punishment of its error, warning Porsenna meanwhile that three hundred Roman youths were equally determined. The king, alarmed, set him free, and hastened to conclude peace, and thereafter Mutius was known as *Scævola*, or "left-handed." Dante tells his story again in *De Mon.*, ii. 5.

[1] Titus Manlius, surnamed Torquatus, from the collar (*torques*) which he took from a fallen foe, being at the head of the Roman army, condemned his own son to death for having, against orders, and in a most dangerous position, attacked and vanquished an enemy by whom he and the Romans generally had been insulted. Dante mentions him in the next chapter again, and in *Par.*, 6. 46.

[2] "I saw that Brutus who drove Tarquin forth."
(*Inf.*, 4. 127.)
Junius Brutus, the first consul.

[3] Karl Witte thinks *Drusii* to be a mistake, and suggests the substitution of some other name. Giuliani suggests that of the *Fabii*, who are named by Dante with the Decii in *Par.*, 6. 47. Father, son, and grandson of the Decii gave their lives for the state. The Fabii are principally known through Quinctius Maximus, surnamed *Cunctator*, or the "delayer," from whom we have the "Fabian policy." Dante speaks of the Decii in *De Mon.*, ii. 5. But the Drusii are named *with* the Decii in the sixth book of the *Æneid*.

[4] M. Attilius Regulus, consul for the first time 267 B.C. He went to Rome on his famous embassy as a Carthaginian captive, about 250 B.C., and having given counsel entirely against his own interests, returned to Carthage, and was cruelly murdered by being rolled down hill in a cask stuck full of nails.

Who will say it of Quinctius Cincinnatus,[1] made dictator, and taken from the plough, who, his term of office having expired, voluntarily resigned that office and returned to his plough? Who will say of Camillus,[2] banished and hunted into exile (who, having come to free Rome from her enemies, after his liberation voluntarily returned into exile that he might not offend the senatorial authority), that he did this without Divine instigation? O most sacred heart of Cato,[3] who will presume to speak of thee? Certainly

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[1] "Quinctius, who from locks
Unkempt was named."

(*Par.*, 6, 46.)

"And did not Cincinnatus leave us a grand example [of devotion to the public good] when he freely relinquished his dignities when their term expired, having been taken from the plough and made dictator, as Livy [Orosius] tells us? And after his victory and his triumph, he returned the imperial sceptre to the consuls, and went back to his possessions, to sweat behind his oxen" (*De Mon.*, ii. 5).

[2] Marcus Furius Camillus was one of the most illustrious heroes of the Roman republic. He triumphed four times, was five times dictator, and was called the second founder of Rome. Having gone into voluntary exile when a false accusation was about to be brought against him, he refused to accept an invitation tendered him by many of the senators to return and assume command. He died 365 B.C. Dante praises him again in *De Mon.*, ii. 5, and says, "He is praised as magnanimous by Virgil himself in the sixth [book of the *Æneid*], where he speaks of Camillus recovering the standards."

[3] "O holy heart!" exclaims Dante, speaking of Cato (*Purg.*, i. 80). In both cases the word is literally "chest" (*petto*, not *seno*, "breast"), which is often used by Dante in the sense of heart or soul. It is Cato of Utica to whom he refers here, commonly called Cato the Younger, to distinguish him from his great-grandfather, also named Marcus Porcius Cato, and called Cato the Elder, and Cato the Censor. In the twenty-eighth chapter Dante uses him as a symbol of the Deity. In the *De Mon.*, ii. 5, he says, "Again appears the ineffable sacrifice of that most severe man, the author of liberty, Marcus Cato: one Cato, for his country's salvation, did not fear death; the other, in order that the love of liberty might be kindled in the world, declared what price liberty was worth, when he preferred to go out of life free rather than to live without liberty." From this it is easy to see why Dante makes him the type of liberty in *Purgatory*, which is the liberation of the soul from sin through purification.

nothing greater than silence can be said of thee, after the example of Jerome, when in the preface to the Bible, where he alludes to Paul, he says that it is better to be silent than to say [too] little. Certainly it must be evident, when we recall the lives of these and other divine citizens, that they could not have wrought so many wonderful deeds, had not some light of the Divine Goodness been added to their own goodness of nature. And it ought to be evident that these most excellent ones were the instruments[1] used by Divine Providence in the forming of the Roman Empire, wherein the arm[2] of God often seemed to be present. And did not God put His own hand to the battle wherein the Albans first fought with the Romans[3] for the chief dominion, when a single Roman held the freedom of Rome in his hands? And did not God put forth His hand when the Gauls, having taken all Rome, stole into the Capitol by night, and only the voice of a goose made it known?[4] And

[1] "We are often instruments of God" (*Ep. Reg. Ital.*, viii.; and see preceding chapter, par. 5).

[2] "Infinite Goodness hath such ample arms,
That it receives whatever turns to it."
(*Purg.*, 3. 122.)

"To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (Isa. liii. 1). "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm" (Exod. vi. 6).

[3] The Horatii and Curatii. "The three to three fought for it" (*Par.*, 6. 39; and see *De Mon.*, ii. 10). Giuliani remarks that whereas up to this point Dante had tried to prove the Roman Empire to be founded on the extraordinary virtues of the Romans, he now endeavours to base it upon the special interpositions of Providence. This order is the reverse of that observed in the *De Monarchia*, when his judgment and logic were more mature.

[4] Dante repeats this description (*De Mon.*, ii. 4).

"The silver goose before the shining gate
There flew, and by her cackle saved the state.
She told the Gauls' approach; the approaching Gauls,
Obscure in night, ascend and seize the walls."
(*Æneid*, viii., Dryden's trans.)

did not God put forth His hand, when in the wars of Hannibal[1] (having lost so many citizens that three bushels of rings were carried into Africa) the Romans would have abandoned the country, if that blessed youth Scipio[2] had not undertaken his expedition into Africa for her deliverance? And did not God put forth His hand when a new citizen of low condition, that is, Tullius,[3] against such a citizen as Catiline defended Roman liberty? Most certainly.

5. Whence can we ask no further proof that a special origin and a special growth, thought out and ordained by God, was that of the holy city. And certainly I am of the firm opinion that the stones which form her walls are worthy of reverence; and the ground on which she stands is worthy beyond all that has been preached and proved by men.[4]

"The lingering war
That of the rings made such illustrious spoils."
(*Inf.*, 28. 10.)

Referring to Hannibal's famous battle at Cannæ in the second Punic war, where sixty-two thousand men were killed, and three bushels of rings taken from the fingers of the vanquished.

[2] "Under that eagle triumphed the two youths,
Scipio and Pompey."
(*Par.*, 6. 52.)

Scipio fought at the age of seventeen against Hannibal at Ticino; at nineteen was at the battle of Cannæ; at twenty conquered Spain; and at thirty-three won the decisive victory over Hannibal. In *Par.*, 27. 61, Dante mentions Scipio again, and in *Inf.*, 31. 116, he calls him "the heir of glory" (see also *De Mon.*, ii. 10).

[3] Cicero, whom Dante always speaks of as *Tullius*, discovered and exposed the Catiline conspiracy in the year 63 B.C.

[4] "A citizen of that Rome where Christ is Roman."
(*Purg.*, 32. 102.)

"[Rome] was stablished as the holy place, wherein
Sits the successor of the greatest Peter."
(*Inf.*, 2. 23.)

"That Rome to which, after the glory of so many triumphs, Christ, with words and deeds, confirmed the empire of the world" (*Ep. Card.*

Chapter VI.

1. In the third chapter of this book we promised to speak of the supremacy of the imperial and of the philosophic authority. And therefore, having spoken of the imperial, it behoves me, in this digression, to go on to consider the philosophical, according to the promise made. And first we must see what is the meaning of this word [authority], because it is more necessary to understand it in this sense [of philosophical] than in the discussion of the imperial authority, which, on account of its majesty, does not seem to be doubted.

2. We must know, then, that *authority* is nothing else than the act of an *author*. This word (that is *auctore*, and without its third letter, *c*) may have two origins: one from a verb quite fallen into disuse in grammar, which means to link words together, namely, AUIEO;[1] and any one who considers it in its first voice [*auieo*] will see plainly what it demonstrates itself, that it is made up entirely of the *links* of words, that is, of the five vowels alone, which are the soul and the connecting links of every word; and is composed of them in a way that may be varied [or twisted] to represent the image of a link [or chain], because

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Ital., ii.) "And to you especially, who as little children knew the sacred Tiber, are my words addressed; for the capital of Latium should be revered as the common principle of civilization" (Ibid., x.).

[1] In a manuscript of Uguccione de' Bagni di Pisa, in the Ambrosiana Library at Milan, we find, "Invenitur quoddam verbum difectivum, scilicet Auieo, idest *ligo et inde Autor* (Auctor sine *c*) idest *Ligator*. Et ab Autor, quod significat *autentim*, derivatur *Autoritas*, *idest sententia imitatione digna*" (Giuliani, from *De Deriv. Verb.*).

beginning with A we then turn back into the U, and come directly by I into E, whence we turn again to the O; so that this figure [auieo], which is the figure of a link, really represents [the vowels] A E I O U.[1] And how far "author" comes from this verb we learn only from the poets, who have linked their words together with musical art;[2] and with this signification we have nothing to do.

3. The other origin of "author," as Uguccione witnesses in the beginning of his *Derivations*, is a Greek word,[3] *autentim*, which is equivalent in Latin to "worthy of faith and obedience." And thus "author," from this derivation, is applied to any person worthy of being believed and obeyed. And thence comes the word with which we are at present concerned, that is, "authority;" whence we may see that "authority" is equivalent to an "act worthy of faith and obedience."[4]

4. That Aristotle is most worthy of faith and obedience, and that his words are of supreme and highest authority, can be proved thus. Among work-

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[1] Dante, in this extraordinary and much-disputed passage, seems to have had in his mind this figure: ⌊a⌋u⌊i⌋e⌊o⌋

[2] Dante speaks of the harmonious or musical relations of words both in *Conv.*, i. 7, and ii. 14.

[3] Perticari thinks this quotation from the standard Greek dictionary of the time proves that Dante had some knowledge of Greek (see also the *Ep. to Can Grande*, par. 10, etc.). But it seems that he must have studied Aristotle in the Latin translation, as he professes himself unable, in book ii. 15, to decide as to the Philosopher's true opinion about the Galaxy, on account of the difference in the *translations*. Fraticelli thinks, if Dante did not understand Greek when that book was written (about 1298), he learned it afterwards: witness his references to Homer "who cannot be translated," and from whom he nevertheless quotes. This, however, to my mind, is no argument.

[4] Here there is a gap in the text, which Giuliani supplies by a simple inversion of the two members of the following sentence.

men and artificers in different trades and manufactures all tending to some final art of manufacture, the artificer or workman in this latter ought above all to be obeyed and trusted by the rest, as he who alone considers the ultimate end of all their several ends.[1] Wherefore the cavalier[2] should be trusted by the sword-maker, the bridle-maker, the saddler, the armourer, and all the trades that contribute to the art of cavalry. And since all human actions demand an end, which is that of human life, to which man is ordained, inasmuch as he is man; the master and workman who considers this and demonstrates it to us ought especially to be believed in and obeyed; and such is Aristotle; therefore he is most worthy of faith and obedience. And in order to see how Aristotle is the master and leader of human reason, as far as its final end is concerned, we must know that this end of our being, which all naturally desire,[3] was, in the most ancient times, sought for by the sages. And since those who desire it are in such numbers, and their appetites are almost always individually different, although universally[4] the same, therefore it was very difficult to discern that wherein every human appetite might be righteously satisfied.

5. There were then very ancient philosophers (of

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[1] *Conv.*, iv. 2, par. 2.

[2] Dante probably meant a cavalry officer, but as the word may also mean "knight," I have translated it as above.

[3] "Each one a good confusedly conceives
Wherein the mind may rest, and longeth for it."
(*Purg.*, 17. 126.)

[4] The universal desire for happiness—
"That apple sweet, which through so many branches,
The care of mortal men is still pursuing."
(*Purg.*, 27. 115.)

whom the first and principal was Zeno[1]), who perceived and believed this end of human life to be solely a rigid virtue; that is, rigidly to follow truth and justice without regard to anything; to show grief at nothing, to show joy at nothing, to have no consciousness of any passion whatever. And they defined such virtue thus: *that which, without fruit, is of itself praiseworthy.*[2] And these and their sect were called Stoics; and to them belonged that glorious Cato of whom I dared not speak before.[3]

6. There were other philosophers who saw and believed differently; and of these the first and principal was a philosopher named Epicurus,[4] who seeing that every animal as soon as it is born is directed by nature, as it were, to its destined end, that it flies from pain and demands joy, said that the end of our being was *voluptate* (I do not say *voluntade*, but write it with a *p*[5]), that is, *pleasure without pain.* And because he admitted no mean between pleasure

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[1] Zeno, the founder of the Stoic philosophy, is mentioned in *Inf.*, 4. 138, with Empedocles and Heraclitus. He is quoted by Cicero in the *Offices*, as saying that virtue is the only good.

[2] That is, a thing desirable in itself, without regard to its results.

[3] That is, in the preceding chapter.

> "Worthy of so much reverence in his look,
> That no son can owe more to any father."
>
> (*Purg.*, 1. 32.)

Dante's reverence for Cato is confirmed by the general opinion of his severe purity. Having once entered a theatre where the licentious floral games were to be given, the people dared not call for them to begin in the presence of Cato; seeing which he left the theatre (see Martial, i. Ep. 1).

[4] "Epicurus and his followers,
Who with the body mortal make the soul."

(*Inf.*, 10. 14.)

[5] This distinction necessitates leaving the words in the original. The parenthesis is evidently aimed at careless copyists.

and pain, he said that pleasure was no other than the absence of pain; as Tullius seems to repeat in the first of *De Finibus.* And of those who were called Epicureans, after Epicurus, was Torquatus,[1] the noble Roman, descended from the blood of that glorious Torquatus before mentioned [in ch. 5].

7. There were others, and they took their origin from Socrates, and then from his successor Plato,[2] who (considering [the subject] more profoundly, and seeing that in our actions it was possible to sin, and that we might sin through excess or default) said that our conduct, without excess and without default, measured by the [just] mean of our own choice, which is virtue, was that end [of life] of which we now speak; and they called it *virtuous action.*[3] And these were called *Academicians*, and of them were Plato and Speusippus[4] his nephew; [they were] so called after the place where Plato studied, that is, the *Academy.* From Socrates no word was derived, because in his philosophy nothing was affirmed.

8. Nevertheless Aristotle, who took his surname from Stagira, and Xenocrates Chalcedonius[5] his

[1] L. Manlius Torquatus, who was killed in Africa soon after the battle of Pharsalia, was a distinguished Greek scholar, praised as such by Cicero, and mentioned by him as an advocate of the Epicurean philosophy.

[2] Mentioned together, *Inf.*, 4. 134.

[3] This very obscure passage seems to mean that such human conduct as errs neither by excess nor default, estimated by the proper mean of our own choice, is virtuous, and, being virtuous, is the destined end of life (see ch. 17 on "the elective habit").

[4] Speusippus was the favourite disciple and nephew of Plato, who married him to one of his nieces. In 357 B.C. he succeeded Plato as head of the Academy.

[5] Xenocrates Chalcedonius (396–314 B.C.), called by Cicero the most austere of philosophers, succeeded Speusippus in the Academy, where he lectured for twenty-five years. He accompanied Plato in his voyage to Sicily.

companion, by means of the almost divine genius with which nature had endowed Aristotle, recognizing this end [of life] by the Socratian method, as it were, by the academical filed down [or refined] and reduced moral philosophy to perfection, and especially [was this true of] Aristotle. And because Aristotle began his arguments while walking hither and thither, they were called (he and his companions, I mean) *Peripatetics*, which is equivalent to *perambulators*. And because the perfecting of this morality [moral philosophy] was finished by Aristotle, the name of Academicians died out, and all who belonged to this sect are called *Peripatetics*;[1] and these hold to-day the control of the world in doctrine throughout all parts, and might almost call theirs *catholic* [or universal] *opinion*.[2] By which it may be seen that Aristotle was the guide and leader of the people to this point. And this is what we wished to prove.

9. Therefore, to sum up, the principal idea is proved; that is, that the authority of the philosopher, which is here defended, is supreme, and full of all power. And it is not opposed to the imperial authority; but the latter without the former is dangerous; and the former without the latter is somewhat weak, not in itself, but through the dis-

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[1] See end of ch. 14, book iii., for "the three sects of the celestial Athens," and a very curious passage in ch. 22, book iv., where these three sects are compared to the three Maries looking for the body of Christ (or *blessedness*), and are explained to be "the three sects of the *active* life," by which life our true beatitude cannot be found.

[2] The only other place where Dante uses the word "catholic" in the *Convito* is in book ii. ch. 4, where it is explained to have the sense of "the pious" generally (or "the orthodox"); in the *Commedia* it is used but once (*Par.*, 12. 104), where he calls the Church "the catholic garden."

orders of the people; so that when joined together they are most useful and most full of power. And therefore it is written in the Book of Wisdom, "Love the light of Wisdom, all ye who are before the people;"[1] which is to say, Unite the *philosophical* with the *imperial* authority to rule well and perfectly. O miserable ones who rule at present! and O most miserable ones who are ruled! who join no philosophical authority to your government, neither by your own study nor by counsel, so that to all may be addressed the words of Ecclesiastes,[2] "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning!" and to no land can be addressed that which follows:[3] "Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!" Take heed to yourselves, enemies of God, ye who have seized the sceptres of the kingdoms of Italy! And I speak to you, Charles and Frederic, kings,[4] and to you, other princes and tyrants; and see whom ye have by your side as counsel, and count up how many times a day this end of human life is

[1] The same passage is quoted at the beginning of ch. 16. In the English version it reads, "Love righteousness, ye that be judges of the earth" (Wisdom of Solomon i. 1). See ch. vi. 21 of the same book, and also ch. vi. 9: "Unto you therefore, O kings, do I speak, that ye may learn wisdom."

[2] Eccles. x. 16. [3] Ibid. x. 17.

[4] Charles II. of Anjou, King of Apulia (died 1309), and Frederic of Aragon, King of Sicily (1296–1337), who both afflicted Sicily, the one by violent usurpation, the other by wretched government. See *Par.*, 20. 63—

"Whom the same land deplores
That weepeth Charles and Frederic still alive."

The mention of these kings in this chapter as living, shows that this part of the *Convito* must have been written before May 5, 1309, when Charles II. died.

pointed out to you by your counsellors! Ye had better fly low, like swallows, than, like vultures, wheel high above the vilest things![1]

CHAPTER VII.

1. AS we have seen how greatly the imperial and the philosophical authority should be revered, as the foregoing opinions seem to confirm, we have now to return to the way that leads directly to our intended end. I say, then, that this last opinion of the vulgar [touching Nobility] is of such long duration, that without any reference to anything else, without any reasonable inquiries, every one is called *noble* who is the son or grandson of any man of worth, although he himself may be good for nothing. And this is where it says—

> "And now so long has reigned
> This very false opinion among men,
> That one is wont to call
> Him noble who can say, 'I was the son
> Or grandson of a truly noble man,'
> Though he himself were nothing."

2. Wherefore we should take notice that it is a most dangerous negligence which allows a vicious idea to take root;[2] for as weeds increase in an uncultivated field, and overtop and cover the ears of grain, so that, looked at from a distance, the grain cannot be seen, and finally is quite lost; so a false idea in the mind, which is neither reproved nor corrected, grows and multiplies, so that the ears of

[1] "Therefore let such men cease to show so much presumption; and if through their natural indolence they are geese, let them not desire to imitate the high-flying eagle" (*Vulg. El.*, ii. 4).

[2] See note 2, par. 3, of ch. 1, book iv.

reason, that is, true opinions, are hidden, and being buried, as it were, are lost. Oh, how great is my undertaking in this canzone, in wishing now to weed so overgrown a field as is that of common opinion, so long left without any tillage whatever! Certainly I do not intend to weed it all, but only in that part where the ears of reason are not entirely overgrown; that is, I mean to raise up those in whom some little light of reason, through the goodness of their nature, still shines; for it is useless to spend any more care on the others than on the brutes; since it seems to me no less a marvel to restore to reason him in whom it is entirely extinct, than to restore to life him who has lain four days in the grave.

3. Then, after the bad condition of popular opinion has been described, suddenly, like some horror, as it were, I break forth from the order of my confutation, saying, "*But vilest he (to him who sees the truth)*," in order to make evident his intolerable wickedness, saying that he lies worse than all the rest. Because not only is he *vile*, that is, not noble, who, being descended from good men, is wicked, but indeed is *most vile;* and I demonstrate it by the simile of the right path already shown. And to explain this, a question is needed, to be answered in this manner.

4. There is a plain, where there are certain roads, fields with hedges, with ditches, with stones, with timber, with almost every kind of impediment, outside of the narrow paths. And it has snowed so much that the snow covers everything,[1] and makes it all

[1] "The husbandman, whose forage faileth him,
Rises, and looks, and seeth all the fields
Gleaming with white."

(*Inf.*, 24. 7.)

look alike, so that no vestige is seen of any road. A man comes from one side of the plain, and wishes to go to a house on the other side, and by his diligence, that is, by his intelligence and quick wit, guided only by himself, he goes by the direct road whither he means to go, leaving the prints of his footsteps behind him.[1] Another comes after him, wishing to go to the same house, and having nothing to do but to follow the footprints, through his own fault (in spite of this guide) leaves the road which the other man knew how to keep without a guide, and wanders about among the thorns and the ruins, and does not get to the place where he should go. Which of these can be called a man of worth?[2] I answer, he who went first. And what will the other be called? I answer, most vile. Why is he not called *worthless*, that is, [simply] *vile?* I answer, because he would be called worthless, that is, simply *vile*, who, having nothing to guide him, lost his way; but because this other had a guide, his error and his failure can go no further [are superlative], and therefore he is called, not vile, but *vilest.*

5. And so he who is ennobled through his father, or some one of his ancestors, and does not persevere [in the noble life], is not only vile, but *vilest*, and more worthy of all reproach and shame than any low-born man. And that man may keep himself from this lowest depth of vileness, Solomon, in the twenty-second chapter [twenty-eighth verse] of his Proverbs, commands him who has had a worthy ancestor,

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[1] In *Par.*, 31. 80, Beatrice is said to "have left the traces of her steps in hell."

[2] *Valente*, generally "valiant," is here used by Dante in the sense of "worthy." And "vile" means low, base, ignoble, or abject.

"Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set;" and he says before that, in the fourth chapter [eighteenth verse] of the said book, "The path of the just" (that is, the worthy) "is as the shining light; . . . but the way of the wicked is as darkness, and they know not at what they stumble."

6. Finally, when it says, "*And being as one dead, still walks the earth*," to his still greater shame, I say that such a person, being most vile, is dead, though he seem to be living. For we must know that the wicked man may truly be called dead,[1] and above all, he who departs from the righteous way of his ancestors. And this may be proved thus: As Aristotle says in the second of *The Soul*, to live is the being [or condition] of the living; and as there are many ways of living (such as vegetating, in plants; vegetating and feeling, in animals;[2] vegetating, feeling moving and reasoning, or thinking, in men), and as things should be denominated from their noblest part, it is evident that *to live*, with animals, is *to feel* (by animals, I mean the brutes), but with man, is to *use reason*. Therefore, if to live is the being of man, and to give up the use of his reason is to put an end to this being, thereby he dies.[3] And does he not give

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[1] "These miscreants, who never were alive."
(*Inf.*, 3. 64.)

[2] Giuliani refuses to insert "and moving" here, as some of the editors have done, because Dante (in *Conv.*, iii. 2) has said that "the power of *moving* may be considered as one with *feeling*."

[3] "The pass
Which never yet a living person left."

"This passage," says Scartazzini, "refers to the spiritual, not the bodily life, seeing that 'to *live*, with man, is to use reason.' 'For to be earnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace'" (Rom. viii. 6).

up the use of reason, who does not reason upon the end of his life? And does he not give up the use of reason who does not reason upon the path he should pursue? Certainly he does; and this is most especially evident in him who has the footprints [of his ancestors] before him, and does not heed them; and therefore Solomon says, in the fifth chapter of Proverbs [twenty-third verse], "He shall die without instruction, and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray;" that is to say, he is dead who does not make himself a disciple, who does not follow the Master, and this man is most vile. But some may say, How can he be dead and yet walk? I answer, that he is dead as man, but survives as beast. Because, as the philosopher says, in the second of *The Soul*, the powers of the soul stand above each other as the figure of the quadrangle stands above the figure of the triangle, and the pentagon stands above the quadrangle. So the sensitive [soul] stands above the vegetative, and the intellectual above the sensitive.[1]

[1] See *Conv.*, iii. 2, par. 3. In the fourth canto of *Purgatory*, Dante reproves the error of the Platonists, who taught that there were three separate souls, instead of three powers of one soul. In the twenty-fifth canto, l. 52, *et seq.*, he describes the development of the soul in the human embryo, beginning with the vegetative, "as of a plant," then developing into the simplest animal form "like a sea-fungus," with gradually increasing powers. "But how from animal it man becomes, thou dost not see as yet." But "as soon as the articulation of the brain is perfect," the Primal Motor inspires it "with a spirit new" that combines the other powers with itself, and becomes one soul, "which lives and feels, and on itself revolves" (cogitates).

How closely, in this famous passage, Dante has followed the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas, may be seen by referring to Scartazzini's notes upon it, in his edition of the *Commedia*, or to the *Summa Theol.*, p. i. qu. 118, art. 1, 2, etc. Here also, as in many places, he copies the doctrines of the Kabbalists, who have an axiom, "A stone becomes a plant; a plant, a beast; a beast, a man," etc. The nucleus of inorganic matter, united with a deposit of organic matter, develops, as Dante has

Therefore as, by removing the last angle of the pentagon, a quadrangle remains, so, taking away the ultimate power of the soul, that is, the reason, there remains no longer a man, but a thing with a sensitive soul only, that is, a brute animal.

7. And this is the meaning of the second verse of the canzone I have undertaken, in which are expressed the opinions of others.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. THE most-beautiful branch that springs from the root of reason is *discernment*.[1] For as [St.] Thomas says, in the *Prologue to the Ethics*, to understand the relation of one thing to another is the special act of reason;[2] and this is discernment. One of the sweetest and most beautiful fruits of this branch is the reverence which the lesser owes the greater. Whence Tullius, in the first of the *Offices*, speaking of the beauty that shines forth from virtue, says that reverence[3] is part of it; and as this is the beauty of virtue, so its opposite is the abasing and belittling of the virtuous, which opposite, in our vulgar tongue, may be called irreverence or insolence. And, there-

described it, from the mineral, through the vegetable and animal stages, till "at the fourth hour" it receives the spirit of life. This is called the completion of "the individual cycle of evolution."

[1] The word in the original is *discrezione*, used by Dante in the sense of "discernment," as in *Inf.*, 31. 54—

"More just and more *discerning* hold her for it."

[2] "Et si vires sensitivæ cognoscant res aliquas absolute, ordinem unius rei ad aliam cognoscere est solius intellectus aut rationis" (and see *Conv.*, i. 11, par. 2).

[3] "There is, therefore, a degree of respect due from us, suited to every man's character" (*Offices*, i. 28).

fore, this Tullius says in the same place, "To be careless about what others think of him, is the part, not only of an arrogant, but of a dissolute person;"[1] which is no other than to say that arrogance and profligacy are not to know one's self, which is the beginning of the measure of all reverence.

2. Wherefore I (speaking with all reverence towards the prince and towards the philosopher), wishing to free the minds of some men of their error, in order to let in there afterwards the light of truth,[2] before I confute the aforesaid opinions, will proceed to show how in that confutation I neither speak irreverently against imperial majesty nor against the philosopher. For should I show myself irreverent in any part of this book, nowhere would it appear so unseemly as in this treatise; wherein, treating of Nobility, I ought to show myself noble and not vulgar. And first I will prove that I do not presume against the authority of the philosopher, and then I will show that I am not presumptuous as regards imperial majesty.

3. I say, then, that when the Philosopher says, "that which appears [true] to the majority cannot be entirely false," he did not mean the external appearance, which appeals to the senses, but the intrinsic, that is, the rational [appearance]; because

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[1] "It is not only arrogant, but it is profligate, for a man to disregard the world's opinion of himself" (*Offices*, i. 28, Edmonds' trans.).

[2] "Now, as beneath the strokes of the warm rays
Naked the subject of the snow remains,
Without its former colour or its cold;
So thee, remaining free in intellect,
Would I inform with such a living light."
(*Par.*, 2. 109.)

"Without dispelling the darkness of false affections, we cannot know the splendour of the true light" (Boëthius, *Cons. Phil.*, i. 6).

the perceptions of the senses in most people are exceedingly false, especially those general perceptions[1] wherein the senses are so often deceived. For we know that to most people the sun appears to be a foot in diameter: and yet this is most false; because, according to the researches and investigations of human reason and all its arts, the diameter of the sun is five times that of the earth and a half more; so that the earth, having a diameter of six thousand five hundred miles, the diameter of the sun, which to the sight appears as one foot, is thirty-five thousand seven hundred and fifty miles. Whence it is evident that Aristotle did not mean the perceptions of the senses. And therefore, if I intend only to confute these sensual appearances, I do nothing contrary to the meaning of the philosopher, nor, therefore, do I offend against the reverence due to him. And that I intend to confute this sensual appearance is evident; because they who judge thereby, judge only by what they perceive of those things that fortune can give and take away. For, because they see the relationships formed by high marriages, the splendid edifices, the immense possessions, the great lordships [of the nobles], they believe these to be the causes of Nobility—nay, believe them, indeed, to be Nobility itself. But if they judged according to the rational appearance, they would say the opposite, that is, that Nobility is the cause of these things, as we shall see hereafter in this book.

4. And as it may be seen that I do not speak with

[1] "The common object, which the sense deceives." (*Purg.*, 29. 47.)
See also *Ep. to Can Grande*, 2; and *Conv.*, iii. 9, par. 4, note 2.

irreverence of the philosopher, that is, in confutation of him, neither do I speak in a manner contrary to the reverence due to the empire, and I intend to show the reason. But as he speaks before an opponent, the rhetorician should use much caution in his speech, so that his opponent may draw therefrom no material wherewith to pervert the truth. I, who speak in this book in the presence of so many opponents, cannot speak briefly; therefore, if my digressions are long, let no one wonder thereat.

5. I say, then, that in order to prove that I am not irreverent towards the majesty of the empire, we must first see what reverence is. I say that reverence is no other than the acknowledgment of fitting deference by an evident sign. And this understood, we have to distinguish between these [two]: *irreverence*, which is a privation, and *non-reverence*, which is a negation. And, therefore, irreverence is to refuse to acknowledge fitting deference by an evident sign; non-reverence is to refuse unfitting deference.[1] A man may deny a thing in two ways: in one way he may deny it and sin against truth, when he fails to make an avowal that is due, and this is properly a *denial;* in another way a man may deny a thing and not sin against truth, when he does not acknowledge that which is not; and this is properly a *negation;* as to deny that man himself is wholly mortal is, properly speaking, a *negation.* Therefore, if I deny reverence to the empire, I am not irreverent, but am non-reverent; which is not contrary to reverence, since it does not oppose the empire, as non-living is not opposed to

[1] That is, irreverence is to refuse reverence where it is due; non-reverence to refuse it where it is *not* due.

life, but life is [opposed] to death, which is the privation thereof; because death is one thing and non-living is another; for stones are non-living. And, therefore, death is said to be a privation, which cannot be said save as regards the characteristic quality of the subject, and stones have not the characteristic of life; whence we should say, not that they are dead, but that they are non-living. In a similar way, I, who in this case do not owe reverence to the empire,[1] if I refuse that reverence, am not *irreverent*, but am *non-reverent*, which is not insolence, or aught else that is blamable. But to be reverent would be insolence (if it could be called reverent), because one would fall thereby into more and greater irreverence towards nature and towards truth, as will be seen further on. From this fault Aristotle, that master of philosophers, guards himself, when he says in the beginning of the *Ethics*, "If your friends are two, and one of them be the Truth, the Truth is to be followed."[2] Nevertheless, because I have said that I am *non-reverent*, which is to refuse [unfitting] reverence (that is, to refuse to acknowledge by an evident sign the deference which is *not* due), we have now to see how this is a *negation*, and not a *denial;* that is, to see how in this case I do not owe deference to imperial majesty. And because my reasoning must be lengthy, I intend to state it in the special chapter immediately following.

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[1] Dante explains in the next chapter that reverence is due to the emperor only in those things that belong to his office, and a philosophical opinion expressed by him being outside of that office, reverence for that opinion is not necessary.

[2] *Ethics*, i. 6. "The master of philosophers has taught us that Truth is to be preferred above all friends" (*Ep. Card. Ital.*, § 5).

CHAPTER IX.

1. TO see how in this case (that is, that whether I approve or disapprove of the opinion of the Emperor, I am not in subjection to him) it is necessary to recall what has been said about the imperial office in the fourth chapter of this book; that is, that the imperial authority was devised for the perfecting of human life; and that it is with justice the ruler and regulator of all our actions, and that as far as those actions may extend, so far the imperial majesty has jurisdiction, and beyond those limits it cannot extend. But as every human art and office is confined within certain limits by the imperial office, so the empire is confined by God within certain bounds. And this is not to be wondered at, because we see the office and art of Nature limited in all her operations. For if we would take Universal Nature,[1] she has jurisdiction as far as the whole world (that is, heaven and earth) extends; and this is within certain limits, as is proved by the third of the *Physics*, and the first of *Heaven and Earth*. Therefore the jurisdiction of Universal Nature is confined within certain bounds, and consequently individual Nature likewise; and also to this, its limits are set by Him who is unlimited, that is, the Primal

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[1] "'Philosophy,' he said, 'to him who heeds it,
Noteth, not only in one place alone,
After what manner Nature takes her course
From intellect Divine, and from its art.'"
(*Inf.*, II. 97.)

"The heavens are the instrument of that Divine art which is commonly called Nature" (*De Mon.*, ii. 2).

Good, which is God, who alone with His infinite capacity comprehends the Infinite.[1]

2. And to perceive the limits of our actions, we must know that those alone are our actions which are subject to reason and will; for though we have within us the action of digestion, that is not human, but natural. And be it known that our reason is ordained for four modes of action, to be considered in different ways; for there are things which it only considers and does not originate, nor is able to originate any of them, such as natural and supernatural things [*i.e.* laws], and mathematics;[2] and actions which it considers and performs by its own proper act, which are called *rational*, such as the arts of speech; and actions which it considers and executes in material outside of itself, as in the mechanical arts. And in all these actions, though their consideration is subject to our will, yet they themselves are not subject to our will; for because we may wish that heavy things should rise naturally, they cannot therefore rise; and because we may wish that a syllogism with false premisses should conclude by demonstrating a truth it will not be so; and because we may wish that a house should stand as firmly built inclining as built straight, it will not; because of such things [*i.e.* natural

[1] *Conv.*, ii. 4, par. 1.

"Seeming enclosed by what itself encloses.'
(*Par.*, 30. 12.)

"Not circumscribed, and all things circumscribing."
(*Par.*, 14. 30.)

[2] "And we must know that there are some things not subject to our faculties, which we can only study and know, but not originate; such as the things of arithmetic and geometry, and such-like, natural, logical, or divine. Other things are subject to our faculties, which we can not alone understand, but also execute" (*De Mon.*, i. 3).

laws] we are not the makers, but the discoverers. Another has ordained them, and a greater Maker has made them.

3. There are also actions which our reason considers as within the province of the will, such as to offend or to help; such as to stand firm or to fly, in battle; such as to be chaste or dissolute; and these are entirely under the control of our will; and therefore from them are we called good or wicked,[1] because they are all our own; because our actions extend as far as our will can reach.[2] And because in all these voluntary acts there is some equity[3] to preserve and some iniquity to shun—which equity may be lost from two causes, either by not knowing what it is, or by not wishing to follow it—therefore reason was written down [as the law] that justice might be pointed out and enforced.[4] Wherefore Augustine says, "If men understood this (that is, equity), and understanding it

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[1] *Conv.*, iii. 4, par. 7.

"This is the principle from which is taken
Occasion of desert in you, according
As good or evil loves it gathers in."

(*Purg.*, 18. 64.)

"Therefore I say that judgment comes between apprehension and desire. Because we first apprehend a thing, and then we judge it to be good or evil; and finally, having judged it, we pursue or fly from it" (*De Mon.*, i. 14).

[2] "Light has been given you for good and evil
And free volition."

(*Purg.*, 16. 75.)

Within the province of the will our actions are free, and therefore we are responsible for them.

[3] Dante often uses "equity" or "justice" in the sense of right-doing in its most general signification, reminding one of the saying of Zeno, "Themis is not *with* Zeus, she *is* Zeus himself." The Buddhists sum up the whole spirit of Buddha's doctrine in the one word "justice."

[4] "Hence it behoved laws for a rein to place."

(*Purg.*, 16. 94.)

followed it, there would be no need of written law." And therefore it was written at the beginning of the old *Digest*, "The written law is the art of goodness and equity."[1] To write, to point out, and to enforce this, is the officer appointed of whom we speak, that is, the Emperor, to whom, as far as our own proper acts extend, as before said, we are subject, and no farther. For this reason, in every art and every trade the workmen and apprentices are, and ought to be, subject to the prince and master in these trades and acts; outside of them their subjection ends, because the mastery ends. So that we may almost say of the Emperor, wishing to represent his office by a figure, that he is the rider of human will.[2] And it is very evident how [wildly] this horse goes over the field without a rider,[3] and especially in this wretched Italy, who is left without any means of self-government!

4. And we should consider that the more peculiar a thing is to an art or trade, the greater should be the subjection; for, the cause being increased, the effect is increased also. Wherefore we must know

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[1] Under *Tit. I., De Justitia et Jure*, "Jus est a Justitia appellatum: nam, ut elegantur Celsus definit, jus est ars boni et æqui."

[2] In this use of a comparison applied in *Purg.*, 6. 97, to "the German Albert," we have another argument to prove that this part of the *Convito* was written before the accession of Henry VII. to the imperial power.

[3] "Ah! people, thou that oughtest to be devout,
And to let Cæsar sit upon the saddle," etc.
(*Purg.*, 6. 91.)

"If the present world do go astray,
In you the cause is, be it sought in you."
(*Purg.*, 16. 82.)

"Think that on earth there is no one who governs;
Whence goes astray the human family."
(*Par.*, 27. 140.)

that certain things are so purely matters of art that Nature becomes its instrument; as when we row with oars, where art makes a tool of *impulsion*, which is a natural motion; as in threshing grain, where art makes a tool of *heat*, which is a natural quality. And in [such as] these especially is deference due to the chief and master of the art.

5. And there are things where art is the instrument of Nature, and in these there is less of art; and therein are the workmen less subject to their chief, as in sowing seed in the ground, wherein we have to wait upon the will of nature; or in leaving port, wherein we have to wait upon the natural disposition of the weather. And therefore in these things we often notice disputes among the workmen, and the greater asking advice of the less. There are other things which do not belong to an art, but seem to have some kinship to it, and therein men are often deceived; and in such the apprentices of the artificer or master are not subject, nor are they bound to believe in their master as far as such art is concerned;[1] as fishing seems to be akin to sailing, and understanding the virtues of herbs seems to be related to agriculture; which [really] have no law in common, inasmuch as fishing comes under the art of hunting, and is under its rules; and the knowledge of the virtues of herbs under medicine, or some more noble science.[2] In a similar way, the things that are spoken of in

[1] That is, they are not bound to trust their master in those subjects that seem akin to his art, but do not really belong to it; so a farmer's men, for instance, are not bound to trust his knowledge of medicinal herbs.

[2] Such as physics in general (Pederzini).

the other arts we may see in the imperial art; for some of its rules are purely of this art,[1] such as the laws of marriage, of service, of war, of succession in rank, etc.; and in these we are entirely subject to the Emperor, without doubt or question whatever. There are other of its laws which are, as it were, followers of Nature, such as those that constitute a man of sufficient age to administrate; and in these we are not entirely subject. There are many others which seem to have some kinship with the imperial art; and here he was and is mistaken who believes the imperial dictum to be authoritative on such subjects; as in a definition of *youth*, wherein we can submit to no imperial jurisdiction because it is *imperial*, but that which concerns God should be rendered to God.[2] Therefore we cannot believe nor agree with the Emperor Nero, who defined youth as *beauty and bodily strength*, but with him who should say that youth is *the culmination of our natural life*,[3] for he would be a philosopher.

6. And therefore it is evident that to define Nobility is not part of the imperial art; and if it be not, in treating thereof, we are not subject to him [the Emperor]; and if not subject, we are not bound to reverence him, and this is the conclusion we have sought. Wherefore now, with all licence and liberty of mind, we may strike false opinions to the heart,

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[1] That is, are entirely matters of social convention.

[2] The *Cod. Gadd.*, 135 *primo*, adds, in order to complete the Gospel antithesis, "And that which belongs to imperial majesty should therefore be rendered thereunto" (comp. Luke xx. 25).

[3] Dante defines *youth* as extending from the twenty-fifth to the forty-fifth year (*Conv.*, iv. 24, 25).

and throw them to the ground, so that the truth, through this my victory, may hold possession of the mind of him for whom its light hath power.

CHAPTER X.

1. SINCE the opinions of others concerning Nobility have been stated, and it has been proved that I am at liberty to confute them, I will go on to discuss that part of the canzone which does confute them, beginning, as has been said before, "*He who defines man as a living plant.*" But we must observe, however, that the definition of the Emperor (although defective, as he stated it) in one clause, that is, where he spoke of gentle breeding, implied the breeding of the noble; and therefore in this part is not meant to be disputed. The other clause, which is entirely at variance with the nature of Nobility, I do intend to confute; as it seems to imply two things when it speaks of *holding ancient wealth* (that is, *time* and *riches*), which are entirely different from Nobility, as has been said, and as will be demonstrated hereafter. And, therefore, I make two parts of my confutation: first, I dispute that *riches*, and then that *time*, can confer Nobility. The second part begins, '*Nor will they admit that a man, lowly born, A noble can become.*"

2. We must observe that in confuting [this opinion of] riches, not only is the opinion of the Emperor confuted where it relates to wealth, but also the whole opinion of the vulgar, which is based entirely upon riches. The first part is divided in two: for, firstly, it is stated generally that the Emperor was wrong

in his definition of Nobility; and, secondly, the reason why is shown; and this second part begins, "*For never riches as by some believed.*"

3. I say, then, "*He who defines man as a living plant, First says what is not true,*" that is, what is false, in saying *plant*, and then but *half the truth*, that is, less than the truth, inasmuch as he says *living* and does not say *rational*, which is the difference which distinguishes man from the beasts. Then I say that in the same way did he err "*who wore the imperial crown;*" not saying *emperor*, but "*he who wore the imperial crown*," to show, as has been said above, that to determine such a thing is beyond the imperial office. Therefore I say that he errs similarly who states a false subject for Nobility, that is, *ancient wealth*, and then proceeds with a defective form, or rather differentiation,[1] that is, *gentle breeding*, which does not comprise every characteristic of Nobility, but a very small part thereof, as will be shown hereafter.[2] And we must not forget (although the text says nought of it) that Messere the Emperor[3] herein erred, not only in the clauses of his definition, but also in his manner of defining[4] (although, according

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[1] In the sense of distinguishing quality.

[2] See *Conv.*, iv. 18.

[3] Dante seems to use this old title in a rather ironical fashion here.

[4] In the *Convito*, nobility or human perfection is considered as coming to us from God; in the *De Monarchia*, as the fruit of man's own exertions or those of his ancestors, and is used in a less spiritual sense as *rank* (see *De Mon.*, ii. 3). "For it is manifest that men make themselves noble by means of virtue; I mean by their own virtue, or that of their ancestors; because nobility is virtue conjoined with ancient possessions, as Aristotle says in his *Politics;* and Juvenal says, the nobility of man consists in virtue alone. Which two sentences refer to two kinds of nobility—to that of the man himself, and that of his ancestors."

to what fame reports of him, he was a great logician and scholar[1]), because a definition of Nobility can be more suitably based upon effects than upon principles, seeing that it seems to be of that nature which cannot be made known by first principles, but by things derived therefrom.[2]

4. Then when I say, "*For never riches as by some believed*," I show that they cannot cause Nobility because they are vile; and I show that they cannot take it away, because they are far removed from it. And I prove that they are vile, by one of their greatest and most manifest defects; and this I do when I say, "*Riches are vile, we see.*"[3] Finally, I conclude by virtue of what has been said above, that the upright mind will not be disturbed by their fluctuations; and thus I prove that they are [a thing] quite apart from Nobility, seeing that their union with it produces no effect. Here we must observe that, as the Philosopher thinks, all things which *make* anything must first contain the whole nature of the thing made; wherefore he says, in the seventh of the *Metaphysics*, "When one thing is generated by another, it is generated by

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[1] "Those illustrious heroes, the Emperor Frederic and his well-born son Manfred, . . . who, while fortune favoured them, devoted themselves to humane pursuits and scorned the animal. Wherefore all men who were gifted with lofty souls and many graces strove to unite themselves to the majesty of such great princes; so that everything composed by the excellent scholars of the time issued first from the court of these princes" (*Vulg. El.*, i. 12).

[2] See end of ch. 16, where Dante says that things of one kind cannot be defined by first principles, but by the effects of these principles; not *à priori*, but *à posteriori*. "By their *fruits* ye shall know them."

[3] "For who amasses them,
Gains not content, but only further greed."
(Canz. iii. 3.)

virtue of being contained within the being of the latter."[1]

5. And again we must observe that everything corrupted becomes so through some change, and everything which is changed must be united with the [cause of] change; as the Philosopher says in the seventh of the *Physics*[2] and the first *Of Generation.*

6. These things being stated, I proceed to say that riches cannot confer Nobility, as another believed; and to show the great diversity between the two, I say that neither can they take it away from him who has it. Confer it they cannot, seeing that they are naturally vile, and by that vileness contrary to Nobility. And here vileness by degeneration is to be understood, which is opposed to Nobility; for one opposite is not the cause of the other, nor can it be, for the above-named reason. Which is briefly added to the text in these words, "*For never painter could a figure draw But out of his own soul;*" because no painter can draw a figure if he have not first mentally made himself that which the figure should be.

7. Again, they cannot take it away, because they are far removed from Nobility, and for the reason already given, which is, that for a thing to be changed or corrupted it must be united to that which corrupts; and therefore I add, "*Nor bends an upright tower Before a stream that runneth far away;*" which means no other than to correspond with what has been said

[1] This seems to me to be a general summing-up of the principles of the seventh book, and not a direct quotation.

[2] In ch. i. of book vii. of his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle says, "In all opposite changes there is something which is the subject of the change," and refers to the *Physics.*

before, that riches cannot take away Nobility, calling it *an upright tower*, and riches *a stream that runneth far away.*

CHAPTER XI.

1. IT now only remains to prove how vile riches are, and how disjoined and far removed from Nobility, and this is proved in two clauses of the text, which it is better to understand now; and then, these being explained, what I have said will be evident; that is, that riches are vile, and far removed from Nobility; and hereby the above reasoning against riches will be completely proved.

2. I say, then, "*That they are vile we see, and most imperfect.*" And we have to show what is meant here, and to understand that the *vileness* of anything comes from its imperfectness, and thus Nobility from perfection; for the more perfect a thing is, the more noble its nature;[1] the more imperfect, the more vile. And therefore, if riches are imperfect, it is evident that they are vile. And that they are imperfect the text proves briefly when it says, "*For who amasses them Gains not content, but only greater greed.*" Wherein not only is their imperfectness evident, but also that their nature is most imperfect, and therefore they are most vile. And to this Lucan bore testimony when he

[1] Giuliani points out that this passage shows us how Dante uses "nobility" as a synonym for "sufficiency" in *Inf.*, 2. 9, which *should* be translated—

> "O memory, that didst write down what I saw,
> Here thy *sufficiency* shall be manifest!"

that is, to the task imposed upon it. Scartazzini gives the same interpretation.

said, addressing them, "Without contention the laws would perish; and ye, riches, basest of things, have stirred up warfare."[1]

3. We may briefly glance at their imperfectness in three evident ways: first, in their indiscriminate coming;[2] secondly, in their dangerous growth; thirdly, in their harmful possession.

4. And before I demonstrate this, I must clear up a doubt that seems to arise here; because, seeing that gold and pearls[3] may have the perfect form and functions of their being, it does not seem true to say that they are imperfect. And therefore we must observe that, in so far as they are considered in themselves, they are perfect things, and are not *riches*, but gold and pearls; but in so far as they are ordained for possession by man, they are riches, and in this way are full of imperfection; for it is not impossible for a thing, taken in different aspects, to be both perfect and imperfect.

5. I say that their imperfectness may be observed first in their indiscriminate coming, which is marked by no splendour of distributive justice, but almost always by perfect injustice; which injustice is properly the effect of imperfection.[4] For if the manner of

[1] "Now canst thou, Son, behold the transient farce
Of goods that are committed unto Fortune,
For which the human race each other buffet."
(*Inf.*, 7. 62.)

[2] *Indiscrezione* is "without discernment," as *discrezione* is used by Dante in the sense of "discernment" (see ch. 8, par. 1).

[3] Here follow the words "*e li campi*" ("and the fields") which Giuliani rejects, as a probable interpolation. Possibly some copyist was thinking of the "margherite *dei* campi," or "daisies." In any case, Dante does not repeat the words in the next sentence, nor do they form a desirable addition to this one.

[4] If man were not imperfect, injustice could not exist.

their coming be considered, all [riches] may be acquired in three ways: because either they come by mere chance, as when, without either intention or hope, they come through some unthought-of discovery; or they come through chance assisted by right, as by testament or mutual succession;[1] or they come through chance the assister of right, as by lawful or unlawful pursuits—*lawful*, I mean, when through art, or commerce, or service, these riches are deserved; unlawful, when procured by fraud or theft. And in all these three ways we see the injustice that I speak of; because hidden riches that are discovered, present themselves oftener to the wicked than to the good: and this is so evident that it has no need of proof. Verily I have seen the place, on the side of a mountain in Tuscany, called Falterona,[2] where the lowest peasant in all that country side, while digging, found more than a bushel of the finest silver *Santélenas*,[3] which had perhaps been waiting for him more than a thousand years. And to show this injustice, Aristotle says, that the more man is subject to intellect, the less he is subject to fortune.[4]

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[1] Either by will, or inheritance as next of kin.

[2] "A rivulet that's born in Falterona."
(*Purg.*, 14. 17.

A mountain (4250 feet) a short distance to the north-east of Florence, where the Arno has its source.

[3] The *Santélena* and the *Bisanti* were the commonest coins in the time of Dante, and were of gold, silver, or copper. The *Santélena* (St. Helena) was named after the island near Candia, where it was coined. Called anciently *Therasia*, the sailors gave it the name of *Sant' Elena*, now corrupted to *Santorini*. The name *Santélena* is applied still to certain concave coins, which the common people hang round their children's necks as amulets to ward off epilepsy.

[4] See *Ethics*, x. 9, for a description of the intellectual man as the favourite of the gods.

6. And I say that an inheritance, either by will or by succession, comes oftener to the wicked than to the good; and to this I do not care to bring forward any testimony, but let each one cast a glance around his own neighbourhood, and he will see that concerning which I am silent, that I may accuse no one. Would that it had pleased God that that which the Provençal asked might have been, "that he who is not the heir of goodness might lose the inheritance of wealth."[1] And I say that riches come oftener to the wicked than to the good, for the unlawful never come to the good, because they refuse them; and what good man would ever seek gain through fraud or force? It were impossible that it should be so, because solely by the choice of an unlawful enterprise he would cease to be good. And lawful wealth rarely comes to the good, because as its acquisition demands much anxious care, and the care of the good is directed to greater things, it seldom happens that the good man bestows enough care upon it.

7. Whence it is manifest that in every way riches come to us without justice, and therefore our Lord called them *unrighteous* when He said, "Make to yourselves friends of the riches of unrighteousness,"[2] inviting and comforting men by liberal benefits, which are the begetters of friends. And what a noble exchange he makes, who gives away these most imperfect things, in order to possess and acquire

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[1] "Frederic and Jacomo possess the realms,
But none the better heritage possesses."
(*Purg.*, 7. 119.)

[2] Luke xvi. 9. In the English version "mammon."

perfect things, such as the hearts of worthy men! This exchange may be made every day. Certainly this is a different commerce from the rest, which, thinking to gain one man by benefits, gains thereby thousands and thousands.[1] And who has not Alexander [2] still at heart, because of his royal beneficence? and the good King of Castile,[3] and Saladin,[4] and the good Marquis of Monferrato,[5] and the good Count of Toulouse,[6] and Bertrand de Born,[7] or Galasso

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[1] By the knowledge and memory of these benefits.

[2] "Alexander, King of Macedon, who came nearer than any other to the palm of [universal] monarchy" (*De Mon.*, ii. 9). Seeing that Dante had so lofty an opinion of Alexander, it is strange that we do not find him among the "great spirits" of the Pagan Limbo. He is mentioned in *Inf.*, 14. 31.

[3] This must be Alphonso X. of Castile, surnamed the Wise (1252–1284).

[4] The Saladin of the Crusades, "who wanted nothing to his eternal commendation," says Knolles, in his *History of the Turks*, "but the knowledge of his salvation in Christ Jesus." He died in 1193. Dante puts him in the Pagan Limbo, "standing apart" among

> "The mighty spirits,
> Whom to have seen I feel myself exalted."
> (*Inf.*, 4. 129.)

[5] William VII. (1254–1292), called Longsword, Marquis of Monferrato, and son-in-law of Alphonso X., one of the greatest of the Ghibellines, was taken prisoner by the people of Alessandria, in Piedmont, in 1290, and shut up in an iron cage, to be the scoff of the rabble, till the time of his death, eighteen months later. Dante puts him in the "flowery vale" of Purgatory, canto 7, 134.

[6] The "good Count of Toulouse" and Galasso of Montefeltro are not mentioned elsewhere by Dante, nor have I been able to trace the latter. The former is probably meant for Raymond VI., Count of Toulouse (1156–1222), who was excommunicated three times, and was obliged to take refuge in Spain, but finally recovered a large part of his possessions.

[7] Dante speaks of Bertrand de Born in the *Vulg. El.*, ii. 2, as "one of the most illustrious poets who sang of arms." He was a Vicomte de Hauteforte, of Périgueux in Gascony, who passed his life in singing and fighting. "He set his whole heart on fomenting war," says Raynouard. Dante puts him among "the sowers of scandal and

of Montefeltro, whenever their liberality is mentioned? Certainly not only they who would willingly do such things [had they the power], but they even who would die rather than do them, [alike] love the memory of these men.

Chapter XII.

1. As we have said, the imperfectness of riches is not only to be observed in their indiscriminate way of coming, but also in their dangerous growth; and because in this their imperfection is most evident, it alone is mentioned in the text, saying that whoso amasses them, not only is never satisfied, but increases his thirst for them, and finds them evermore defective and insufficient. And here we must observe that things which are defective may be so in such a way that their defects do not appear at first sight, but they conceal their imperfectness under a pretext of perfection, or they may have these defects so openly displayed that at the first glance we recognize their imperfectness. And those things which do not show their defects at first sight are more dangerous, because very often we cannot guard ourselves against them; as we see in the traitor, who at first appears to be friendly in order that we may put our trust in him, and, under pretext of friendship, hides the defect of enmity. And thus riches are dangerously imperfect

schism" in the *Inferno*, canto 28. He ended his days in a Cistercian convent.

Aroux cites the names mentioned by Dante here as particularly worthy, as one of the proofs of his heresy, all of them being more or less opposed to the papacy, and in league with the Templars.

in their growth; for always giving the lie to their promises, they bring with them just the contrary.[1] The false traitors always promise, when collected in a certain amount,[2] to fill their collector with perfect satisfaction, and by this promise lead the human will into the vice of avarice. And this is why Boëthius, in his *Consolations*, calls them perilous, saying, "Alas! who was the first who dug up loads of buried gold and [precious] stones that would have hid themselves, perilous treasures?"

2. These false traitors promise, if well looked after,[3] to take away all thirst and all desire, and to bring satisfaction and content; and this in the beginning they do for all men, keeping this promise up to a certain point in their increase, but when they have reached that point, instead of satisfaction and refreshment, they impart an intolerable feverish thirst for themselves; and instead of satisfaction, they impose new limits, that is, a larger amount to be desired; and with this a fear and solicitude greater than the added gain. So that truly they do not bring content, but rather *greater greed*, which without them would not have existed. And therefore Tullius says in his *Paradoxes*, in abuse of riches, "I certainly never was one who held either treasures or magnificent mansions, interest, power, or those pleasures to which

[1] Giuliani considers the word *sommettendo* in this much-disputed passage to be a mistake for *sempre mentendo*, and as this makes far better sense than any other of the proposed emendations, I have followed his reading. See *Purg.*, 30. 131—

> "Pursuing the false images of good,
> That never any promises fulfil."

[2] See note 3 to par. 4, *Conv.*, iii. 15.

[3] "*Se ben si guarda*" is a very equivocal phrase, but this seems to be its meaning here.

mankind are chiefly addicted, to be among good and desirable things. For I have observed that those to whom these things abounded still desired them most; for the thirst of cupidity can never be slaked nor satisfied; nor solely by the desire to increase that which they have do they torment themselves, but also find torment in the fear of losing it."[1] And these words are all those of Tullius, and stand thus in the book I have named.

3. And in further testimony of their imperfectness, see what Boëthius says in his *Consolations:* "If the goddess of riches should bestow them in quantity like the sand thrown up by the wind-tossed sea, or like the stars that shine,[2] humanity would not cease to complain." And because it is fitting that we should have further witness to reduce this to proof, let us observe how much Solomon and his father have inveighed against riches, how much Seneca is opposed to them, especially in writing to Lucilius, and how much Horace, and Juvenal, and, in short, every author and every poet, and what the true and divine Scripture says against these false harlots, full of all faults; and call to mind, as ocular witness to your belief, the life of those that run after them,[3] how securely they live

[1] Cicero, *Paradoxes*, i.

"For all the gold that is beneath the moon,
Or ever was, of all these weary souls
Could never give a single one repose."

(*Inf.*, 7. 64.)

[2] "As the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore innumerable" (Heb. xi. 12).

[3] "Thy new inhabitants, and thy sudden gains
Pride and extravagance have in thee engendered,
Florence, so that thou weep'st thereat already."

(*Inf.*, 16. 73.)

when they have amassed them, how they enjoy themselves, and how they take their ease!

4. And what other thing daily imperils and destroys cities, neighbourhoods, individuals, like the amassing of new possessions by some one? Which accumulation inspires fresh desires impossible to fulfil without injury to others. And what else are the two laws (I mean the canonical and the civil law) meant to rectify, but that cupidity which, amassing riches, ever increases? Certainly both laws show this very plainly, if we read the first of their written words. Oh, how evident it is, nay, most evident, that they [riches] are entirely imperfect in their growth, when nothing can come of them but imperfection, however they may be heaped up! And this is what the text says.

5. Nevertheless a doubt arises here, that cannot be passed over without being put as a question, and being answered. Some calumniator of the truth may say, that if riches are imperfect and therefore vile, on account of the desire for them that grows with their accumulation,[1] by the same reason knowledge should be imperfect and vile, in the acquisition of which desire for it ever increases; whence Seneca says, "If I had one foot in the grave, I should still desire to learn." But it is not true that knowledge is vile by reason of imperfectness; therefore, by the destruction of the sequence,[2] the increase of desire is not the cause

[1] "The con-created and perpetual thirst."
(*Par.*, 2. 19.)

[2] Giuliani follows Dionisi in reading "the *destruction* of the sequence" instead of "the *distinction* of the sequence," and quotes *De Mon.*, iv. 5, and *Aq. et Terr.*, 12, and *Conv.*, iv. 14, where the same word occurs in this sense.

of vileness in knowledge. That this is perfect, is shown by the Philosopher in the sixth of the *Ethics*, which says that "knowledge is the perfect reason of indubitable things."[1]

6. To this question we have briefly to respond; but first we must see if in the acquisition of knowledge the desire for it grows, as is expressed in the question, and if this be reasonable. Wherefore I say, that not only in the acquisition of knowledge and of riches does the desire of humanity increase, although in different ways, but in every acquisition; and the reason is this, that the strongest desire of everything, and the one first implanted by nature, is to return to its source.[2] And since God is the Source of our soul and has made it like unto Himself (as it is written, "Let us make man in our image and likeness"[3]), therefore this soul desires above all things to return to Him. And like a pilgrim,[4] who is going by a road he has never travelled, who believes each house that he sees from afar to be his inn, and, disappointed in this one, puts faith in the next, and so on from house to house until he comes to the inn; so our soul, as soon as she enters upon the new and never-travelled path of this life, directs her eyes towards her Supreme Good, and still, whatever thing she sees that seems

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[1] Because that is not knowledge wherewith is mingled any doubt (see *Ethics*, vi. 3).

[2] "In the order that I speak of are inclined
All natures, by their destinies diverse
More or less near unto their origin."
(*Par.*, I. 109.)

[3] Gen. i. 26.

[4] "Like to a pilgrim, who would fain return."
(*Par.*, I. 51.)

to have some good in it, believes that to be what she seeks. And because her knowledge is imperfect, because she has neither experience nor learning, things of little value seem great to her, and therefore she begins by first desiring them. Whence we see children longing above all things for an apple;[1] and as they get on a little, wanting a bird; and further advanced, wishing for fine clothes; and then a horse, and then a mistress, and then moderate wealth, and then more and more. And this happens, because in none of these things does the soul find that which she seeks, and always believes that she will find it further on.[2] Wherefore we may see that one desirable thing stands before the next one, to the eyes of the soul almost like a pyramid; for at first the smallest thing hides all the rest, and is, as it were, the point of the ultimate subject of desire, which is God, standing as the base of all. So that the further the base is from the actual point, the greater these desirable things appear; and this is why, in the process of acquisition, the desires of humanity grow more ample one after another. But thus we lose our way, as in earthly roads; because as from one city to another there is necessarily a best and most direct way, and another that is always growing longer (that is, the one

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[1] "Like to a child that's vanquished by an apple."
(*Purg.*, 27. 45; and see also 24. 103–111.)

[2] "The simple soul, that nothing knows,
Save that proceeding from a joyous Maker,
Gladly it turns to that which gives it pleasure.
Of trivial good at first it tastes the savour;
Is cheated by it, and runs after it,
If guide or rein turn not aside its love."
(*Purg.*, 16. 88.)

leading in the opposite direction), and many others which are less indirect or less direct, so in human life are there divers roads, of which one is most true and another most false, and certain others less false and certain less true. And as we see that the road leading most directly to the city satisfies desire, and gives rest after toil, and that which goes the other way can never satisfy and never give rest, so it happens in our life that the good traveller arrives at his destination and rests; the mistaken one never arrives there, but with much weariness of soul gazes ever onward with his greedy eyes.[1]

7. Wherefore, although this reasoning does not entirely answer the question put above, at least it prepares the way for the answer, for it shows that all our desires do not go on increasing in the same way. But because this chapter is somewhat prolonged, we shall have to reply to the question in a new chapter, in which the whole of the argument which we intend at present to make against riches shall be completed.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. IN answer to the question, I say that the desire for knowledge cannot properly be said to *grow*, although, as has been said, in some ways it *increases*. For that which really grows is always one and the same; but the desire for knowledge is not one but manifold, and one over, another comes; so that,

[1] "My greedy eyes still wandered up to heaven." (*Purg.*, 8. 85.)

properly speaking, its increase is not a growth, but a succession of small things making up a great one. For if I desire to know the principles of natural things, as soon as I learn them that desire is fulfilled and ended; if I then desire to know the why and wherefore of each of these principles, that is another and a new desire. Nor by the advent of the one am I deprived of the perfection acquired by the other; and thus to increase is not a cause of imperfectness, but of greater perfectness. But the increase of riches is properly *growth*, inasmuch as it is always identical, for there is no succession to be seen therein, neither in end nor in perfection.

2. And if our opponent should say that, as the desire to understand the principles of natural things is quite different from wishing to know what they are, so it is quite a different thing to desire a hundred marks and to desire a thousand, I answer, that is not true; because a hundred is part of a thousand, and is related to it as part of a line is to the whole line, along which one moves by a single impulse; and there is no succession in that, nor completion of movement in any part. But to know what the principles of natural things are, and to understand each of them, is not part of the same thing, but their relation is like that between different lines, along which we do not proceed by a single movement, but, one movement completed, another succeeds to it. And thus it appears that knowledge is not to be called imperfect on account of our desire for it, as riches are from our desire for them, as the question had it. For in the desire for knowledge our desires are successively fulfilled and brought to perfection,

but not so in that for riches; so that the question is solved, and there is no room for objection.[1]

3. It may be that our opponent will continue to calumniate [the truth], saying that, although many desires are fulfilled in the acquisition of knowledge, yet we never get to our final desire; which is almost the same as the imperfection of that which has no end, and yet is ever one [*i.e.* the desire for riches]. Here, again, we must answer that what he asserts is not true (that is, that we never get to our final desire), because our natural desires, as has been already shown in the third Book,[2] tend to a certain end; and as the desire for knowledge is natural, it is fulfilled within that limit; although few, on account of their bad choice of roads, accomplish their day's journey. And he who understands the Commentator,[3] in the third *Of the Soul*, knows that he means this; and therefore Aristotle says in the tenth of the *Ethics*,[4] speaking against Simonides the poet, that "a man should draw

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[1] Giuliani inserts here the last two words of the phrase, "non ha luogo *l'istanza*," which seem needed to make the sense complete. *Istanza* in scholastic language (or *instanzia*) meant the rejoinder to the answer. Aristotle defines it as a proposition contrary to another proposition. Dante uses the word many times; for instance, *Par.*, 2. 94—

"From this *objection* experiment will free thee."

[2] In chs. 6 and 15.

[3] "Averrhoës, who the great Comment made."

(*Par.*, 4. 144.)

An Arabian scholar of the twelfth century, who translated the works of Aristotle, and wrote a commentary upon them. He was the head of the Western school of philosophy, as Avicenna was of the Eastern. Born in Cordova, 1149, died about 1200.

[4] *Ethics*, x. 7. Aristotle does not mention Simonides, but both Plutarch and St. Thomas Aquinas quote his assertion of the mortality of man, and therefore Aristotle says, "Man ought as far as possible to make himself immortal, and to do everything with a view to living in accordance with the best principle in him" (*i.e.* the divine).

near to divine things as far as he can;" wherein he shows that our power has certain limits. And in the first of the *Ethics* he says that "the educated man demands certainty of knowledge about things, in so far as their nature admits of certainty.[1] In which he shows that not only in the man desiring, but also in the thing he desires to know, must we expect a limitation;[2] and therefore Paul says, "Not to be more wise than it behoveth to be wise, but to be wise within measure."[3] So that in whatever way we take the desire for knowledge, whether in general or in particular, it arrives at perfection; and therefore perfect knowledge is noble in its perfection, nor does it lose this perfection through the desire for it, as accursed riches do, which we have now to prove briefly as *perilous in possession*, which is the third sign of their imperfectness.[4]

4. We may see that the possession of them is harmful for two reasons: first, that it is the cause of evil; secondly, that it is the privation of good. It is the cause of evil because it makes the possessor wakeful, timid, and hateful. What fear is his, who

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[1] *Ethics*, i. 3. "The educated man demands certainty in each class of subjects, only in so far as the nature of the subject permits." The same sentence is quoted in *De Mon.*, ii. 2.

[2] See par. 4, ch. 15, book iii.

[3] Rom. xii. 3: "Non plus sapere quam oportet sapere, sed sapere ad sobrietatem" (Vulgate); "Not to be more wise than it behoveth to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety" (Douay Bible); "Not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly" (English version). In the *Vita Nuova*, § 12, when Dante has a vision of Love, who speaks to him in Latin, and very obscurely, the poet asks him, "'What is this, Lord, that thou speakest to me so obscurely?' And he answered me in the vulgar tongue, 'Ask no more than can be useful to thee.'" See also Ecclus. iii. 23, "Be not curious in unnecessary matters."

[4] *Conv.*, iv. 11, par. 2, *et seq.*

carries riches about him, whether walking or resting, awake or asleep, not only that he will lose his gains, but that he will be lost for the sake of his gains! Well do the miserable merchants who go about the world know that the leaves shaken by the wind make them tremble, when they are carrying their wealth about them; but when they are without it, full of confidence, they shorten their way by singing and talking.[1] And therefore the sage says, "If the traveller starts empty-handed upon his way, he can sing in the presence of thieves." And this is what Lucan means in his fifth book,[2] when, praising the security of poverty, he says, "O safety of a humble life! O narrow dwellings and huts! O yet uncomprehended riches of the gods![3] to what temples and what walls could this happen, to have no fear of any tumult, though the hand of Cæsar knock?" And this Lucan says in describing how Cæsar came by night to the hut of the fisherman Amyclas to cross the Adrian Sea.[4] And what hatred is that which all

[1] Boëthius, who says, "*Si vitæ hujus callem vacuus viator intrasses, coram latrone cantares*" (*De Cons. Phil.*, ii. 5). And Juvenal, "*Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator*" (*Sat.*, x. 22).

[2] *Pharsalia*, bk. v. 536, where Lucan describes Cæsar knocking up the fisherman Amyclas to take him across the Adriatic, and the poet apostrophizes the blessings of poverty, not even the knocking of Cæsar availing to alarm Amyclas. "O safe the lot of a poor man's life, and his humble home! O gifts of the Deities not yet understood! What temples or what cities could this befall, to be alarmed with no tumult, the hand of Cæsar knocking?" (Riley's translation). And see *Par.*, ii. 67—

"With Amyclas,
And all unmoved at sounding of his voice,
He who had made the world afraid found her."

(That is, Poverty.)

[3] "O unknown riches, O most fertile good!" (*Par.* ii. 82.)

[4] The *Adrian* Sea, like "the Adrian shore" (*Par.*, 21. 123) for the

bear to the possessor of riches, either from envy or from the desire to seize his possessions! Truly it is so great that, often contrary to proper filial piety, the son has desired the death of his father; and of this the Italians can have the strongest and most evident proof, both beside the Po and beside the Tiber. And therefore Boëthius says, in the second of his *Consolations*, "Certainly avarice makes men hateful."

5. And, again, the possession of riches is a *privation of good*, because, holding them, men do not exercise liberality, which is virtue, which is the perfect good, and which makes men renowned and beloved, as they cannot be in possessing riches, but only in ceasing to possess them. Wherefore Boëthius says in the same book, "Then is money a good thing, when, having transferred it to others by the exercise of liberality, one possess it no longer."

6. Therefore the vileness of riches is sufficiently proved by all these signs; and therefore the man of upright desires and true knowledge never loves them; and not loving them, does not unite himself to them,[1] but desires to keep them ever at a distance, save when he claims some necessary service of them. And this is reasonable, because the perfect cannot unite itself to the imperfect. So we see that the crooked line never unites itself with the straight; or, if there be any conjunction, it is not line to line, but point to point. And therefore it follows that the mind which has righteous desires and true knowledge is not ruined

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Adriatic, after the Latin (see Horace, i. ode 16, "sive mare libet *Adriano*").

[1] Love being "the spiritual union of the soul with the thing beloved" (see *Conv.*, iii. 2, par. 2).

by their loss; as the text states at the end of this part. And by this the text means to prove that they are a river running far distant from the upright tower of reason,[1] or rather of Nobility; and therefore that riches cannot take away Nobility from him who possesses it. And in this way, in the present canzone, we argue against and confute riches.

CHAPTER XIV.

1. HAVING confuted the errors of others in so far as they related to riches themselves, we have now to confute those on the subject of *time* as a cause of Nobility, in that part where it is defined as ancient riches, and this is done in the part that begins, "*Nor will they admit that a man lowly born A noble can become.*" And in the first place this is refuted by an argument taken from the very people who are so mistaken; then, to put them to greater confusion, this their argument is destroyed; and this is done where it says, "*And thus it comes from what I've said before.*" Finally, it sums up—their error being evident, and it being, therefore, time to hear the truth,—and this it does where it says, "*Because to the healthy mind,*" etc.

2. I say, then, "*Nor will they admit that a man lowly born A noble can become.*" Here we must observe that it is the opinion of these mistaken ones that a man originally a peasant can never be called a nobleman, and a man who is the son of a peasant can likewise never be called noble. And here they

[1] See end of ch. 10, book iv.

contradict their own statement when they say that time is required for Nobility, by putting in this word *ancient* [riches]; because it is impossible by a process of time to arrive at the generation of Nobility, by this reason of theirs here given, which denies that a man of low birth can ever become noble by anything he may do, or by any accident; and denies the possibility of a change from a low-born father to a noble son. For if the son of a peasant be still a peasant, *his* son also will be a peasant, and thus we can never find a point at which Nobility can begin by process of time.

3. And if our opponent, wishing to defend himself, should say that Nobility begins at the moment when the low estate of our ancestors is forgotten, I answer that this tells against himself, because there must necessarily be a change here from the low estate to the noble, from one man to another, or from father to son, which is contrary to what they assert.

4. And if our opponent defend himself pertinaciously, saying that he maintains that this change may take place when the low estate of one's ancestors has fallen into oblivion, then, although the text takes no notice of this, it is fitting that the commentary should reply to it. And therefore I answer thus: that from what they say four very great difficulties would follow, so that theirs cannot be a good argument.

5. The first is, that the better human nature might be, the more difficult and the more tardy would be the generation of Nobility,[1] which is a great difficulty;

[1] If nobility only came by forgetting one's ancestors, then the more good they did and the more honours they won, the more difficult it would be to forget them. And the longer one's ancestors were remem-

since the better a thing is, the more it is honoured and the more good it causes; and Nobility would be commemorated among the good things. And that this would be so is proved; for if rank, or rather Nobility (which is understood to be the same thing), is generated by oblivion, then the sooner men are forgotten, the quicker is their nobility generated, for so much the sooner would oblivion come for all. Therefore the sooner men were forgotten, the sooner they would be ennobled, and on the contrary, the better the memory of them, the more tardy would be their nobility.

6. The second difficulty is, that in no case except man's could such a distinction be made, that is, between *noble* and *vile*, which is a great difficulty. For in every kind of thing we see an appearance of Nobility[1] or of vileness, whence we often call one horse noble and one vile, or one falcon noble and one vile, or one pearl noble and one vile. And that this distinction could not be made, is proved thus: If the forgetting of ignoble ancestors is a cause of Nobility, where the ancestors never were ignoble there could be no oblivion, since oblivion is the destruction of memory. And in the said animals and plants and minerals, degrees of higher and lower [origin] are not noted, because they spring from one nature and are of equal condition, and in their generation there can be nothing of Nobility or the reverse, seeing that

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bered, the more delayed would be the ennoblement of their posterity. It seems strange that a mind like Dante's could descend to these quibbles, but it was the manner of his age.

[1] Nobility consisting in the perfection of each thing according to its own nature (see ch. 16).

both [extremes] must be regarded as a possession or privation possible to the same subject; and therefore in them no such distinction can exist.

7. And if our opponent were to say that in other things Nobility is understood to be the *goodness* thereof, but in man is understood as the forgetfulness of his low estate, one would like to answer, not with words but with the knife, to such stupidity as would give *goodness* as the cause of Nobility in other things, but in man forgetfulness as its origin.

8. The third difficulty is, that the thing generated would often come before the generator, which is quite impossible; and this may be demonstrated thus: Let us suppose that Gherardo da Cammino[1] was a grandson of the lowest peasant that ever drank of Sile or Cagnano,[2] and that his grandfather were not yet buried in oblivion; who would dare to say that Gherardo da Cammino was not noble? and who would not agree with me in saying that he *was* noble? Certainly none, however presumptuous they may wish to be, because he was noble, and such will his memory ever be. And if his ignoble ancestor had not been utterly forgotten (as our opponent asserts), and he

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[1] Gherardo da Cammino was a gentleman of Trevigi, celebrated for his courtesy and magnificence, who in 1283 was elected captain of the city of Florence, and died in 1308 (according to Scartazzini). Dante mentions him in *Purg.*, 16. 124, as one of the three old men who remain to show the degenerate new age what the old had been. His mention of him here in the *past* tense militates against Fraticelli's argument for dating this part of the *Convito* "*before* 1297." Fraticelli asserts that Gherardo *probably* died about 1298, though Dante speaks of him as alive in 1300. Giuliani says he died March 26, 1306, at Trevigi, which is certainly precise enough.

[2] "Where Sile and Cagnano flow together."
(*Par.*, 9. 94.)
Two rivers that join at Treviso.

had become noble, and his Nobility were as evident as we see it to be, then it would have existed in him before its generator had existed, and this is perfectly impossible.

9. The fourth difficulty is, that such a man [as this supposed ancestor] would be considered noble, being dead, who was not noble when living; and a more impossible thing there could not be, as may be demonstrated thus: Let us suppose that in the age of Dardanus[1] there remained a memory of his low-born ancestors, and let us suppose that in the age of Laomedon[2] this memory had died out, and oblivion had taken its place. According to our opponents' opinion, Laomedon was noble, and Dardanus ignoble, during life. Should we, to whom the memory of their ancestors (I mean beyond Dardanus) has not come down, should we say that Dardanus while alive was a common peasant, and dead, became a noble? And this is not contradicted by the story that he was the son of Jupiter (for this is a fable, of which, in a philosophical discussion, we should take no heed); and yet, if our opponent should wish to fall back on

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[1] "Europe ennobled her most ancient ancestor Dardanus, of whom Virgil speaks in his eighth book" (*De Mon.*, ii. 3).

> "Our founder Dardanus, as fame has sung,
> And Greeks acknowledge, from Electra sprung;
> Electra from the lions of Atlas came,—
> Atlas, whose head sustains the starry frame."
>
> (Dryden's trans.)

Dardanus, the son of Zeus and Electra, was the mythical ancestor of the Trojans, and through them of the Romans.

[2] Laomedon, King of Troy and father of Priam. While he was building Troy, Neptune and Apollo, having revolted against Jupiter, were condemned to serve Laomedon for wages, which, their labour ended, he refused to pay, and in revenge Neptune sent a sea-monster to ravage his kingdom, afterwards destroyed by Hercules.

the fable, certainly that which is covered by the fable would upset all his arguments. And thus it is manifest that the argument of him who would make oblivion the cause of Nobility is false and erroneous.

CHAPTER XV.

1. AFTER the canzone has confuted by their own words the idea that *time* is necessary to Nobility, it goes on immediately to confute their previous opinion, so that nothing of the rust of their false reasoning may remain in the mind that is disposed towards truth; and this is done where it says, "*And thus it comes from what I've said before.*"

2. Here we must observe that if a peasant cannot become noble, or from a base-born father cannot be born a noble son, as is asserted by our opponents to be their opinion, of two difficulties, one must ensue: the first is, that there could be no such thing as Nobility; the second is, that the world must always have contained many men, so that the human race could not have descended from one man. And this can be proved. If Nobility cannot be created anew (as we have said many times, they maintain), not being created by a low-born man in himself, nor by the son of a low-born man, then man must be ever such as he was born, and such as his father was born, and thus this progression in the same condition goes back to our first parent;[1] because such as our first ancestor, that is Adam, was, all the human race must be, for from him down to the moderns we can find

[1] "Hence he drew forth the shade of the First Parent." (*Inf.*, 4. 55.)

by their reasoning no possibility of change. Therefore, if Adam were noble, we are all noble; and if he were not noble, we are none of us noble; which is no other than the sweeping away of all distinctions of rank, and thus of rank itself.

3. And this, I say, follows from what I said before, that "*we are all of base or noble rank.*" And if this is not so, then no people are to be called vile or noble of necessity. Since the change from vileness to Nobility is swept away, the human race must have descended from different origins, that is, from a vile and from a noble source; and this is what is meant by the canzone when it says, "Or more than one beginning had mankind," that is, one beginning and not several; for that would be most false, according to the Philosopher, according to our faith, which cannot lie,[1] and according to the law and ancient belief of the Gentiles.[2] For although the Philosopher does not assert our descent from one first man, still he maintains that one sole essence exists in all men, which cannot have more than one origin. And Plato thinks that all men are dependent upon one idea, and no more; which is to give them a single origin. And undoubtedly Aristotle would have laughed heartily to hear the human race divided into two kinds, like horses and asses; for—begging Aristotle's pardon—we may call those who think thus, asses. That it is most false according to our faith (which is to be accepted[3] in its entirety) is proved by Solomon,

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[1] In *Conv.*, ii. 4, Dante speaks of "the Church, which cannot lie."
[2] Dante uses the word "Gentile" for all non-Christians.
[3] Giuliani's reading. Most texts read "preserved" instead of "accepted."

where he makes a distinction between men and the lower animals, calling all men "sons of Adam;" and he does this when he says, "Who knoweth if the spirits of the sons of Adam mount upward, and those of the beasts go downward?"[1] And that it is false according to the Gentiles, see the testimony of Ovid in the first of his *Metamorphoses*, where he treats of the constitution of the world according to the belief of the pagans (or rather of the Gentiles), saying, "Man is born" (he does not say *men*); "man is born; or either the Artificer of things made him of divine seed; or either the newly-made earth, being but lately divided from the lofty æther, still retained the seed of the kindred heaven, which, mingled with the waters of the river, the son of Japetus[2] made after the image of the gods who govern all things."[3] Wherein it is clearly stated that the first man was a single being; and therefore the canzone says, "*This is not my belief;*" that is, that man had more than one origin; and the canzone adds, "*Nor is it theirs if they still be Christians;*" and it says *Christians*, and not philosophers, or rather Gentiles (whose opinions also are in opposition), because the Christian

[1] Eccles. iii. 21, "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" But Solomon expressly says in the preceding verse, "man hath no pre-eminence above a beast—all go unto one place," and therefore this may well be called a distinction without a difference. The verse probably means, "Who knoweth *if* the spirit of man goeth upward, and *if* the spirit of the beast goeth downward?" etc.

[2] Japetus, one of the Titans, was the son of Uranus and Ge. He married Asia, the daughter of his brother Oceanus, and became the father of Prometheus, and was consequently regarded by the Greeks as the founder of the human race. A little study makes the meaning of this myth sufficiently plain.

[3] Ovid, *Met.*, i. 78, *et seq.*

opinion is of more weight, and is the destroyer of all error,[1] thanks to the supreme light of heaven, which illumines it.

4. Then when it says, "*Because to the healthy mind 'Tis manifest these words of theirs are vain,*" I conclude their error to be confuted; and I say that it is time to open their eyes to the truth. And this I mean when I say, "*And now I wish to say after my thought.*" I say, then, that from what has been said, it is evident to the healthy intellect[2] that the words of these men are vain, that is, without any marrow of truth. And it is not without reason that I say *healthy*. For we must know that our intellect can be called healthy or diseased. And I mean by intellect that noble part of our soul which may be called by the common word *mind*.[3] It may be said to be healthy, when it is not hindered in its operations by any evil disposition of soul or body; which is to know things as they are, as Aristotle has it, in the third *Of the Soul*.

5. For in consequence of an evil disposition of the soul, I have seen three horrible infirmities in the minds of men. One is caused by natural conceit; for many are so presumptuous that they think they know everything, and thus assert things to be facts

[1] The word in the original is "calumny," used, Giuliani explains, in the sense of "contradiction" or "error."

"Of that faith which o'ercometh every error."
(*Inf.*, 4. 48.)

[2] In *Inf.*, 9. 61, Dante calls upon "all who have a healthy intellect" to notice

"The doctrine that conceals itself
Beneath the veil of the mysterious verses."

[3] "By *mind* is meant the ultimate and highest part of the soul" (*Conv.*, ii. 2).

which are not facts; which vice Tullius especially execrates in the first of the *Offices*; and [St.] Thomas in his *Contra Gentili*, saying, "There are many of such presumptuous spirit, that they think they can measure all things with their intellect, esteeming everything to be true which appears so to them, and all that does not so appear to them, as false."[1] And thus it happens that they never arrive at any instruction, believing that they are sufficiently instructed of themselves, never inquiring, never listening, wishing to be questioned, but when questioned, answering badly. And of them Solomon says in the Proverbs, "Seest thou a man quick to answer? There is more hope of folly than correctness from him."[2]

6. The other infirmity is caused by natural pusillanimity,[3] for many are so obstinately poor-spirited[4] that they cannot believe it possible for themselves or for others to know things; and these never seek out things for themselves, nor do they ever reason; that which others say, they do not heed. And against these Aristotle speaks in the first of the *Ethics*, saying that they are incapable hearers of moral

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[1] St. Thomas's actual words were, "Totam Naturam divinam se reputant suo intellectu posse metiri." Whereas God alone is

"That Good
Which has no end, and by itself is measured."
(*Par.*, 19. 51.)

[2] Prov. xxix. 20. The Latin version (from which Dante always quoted) reads, "stultitia magis speranda est, quam ejus *correptio*," which Dante translates *correzione*, or "correctness." The English version reads, "Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him."

[3] See note 2, par. 6, ch. 11, book i.

[4] The original has "vilely obstinate," but it seems to be the excess of their *meanness of spirit* which Dante is blaming, rather than that of their stubbornness.

philosophy.[1] These live ever like the beasts, grossly, and in despair of instruction.[2]

7. The third infirmity is caused by levity of nature; for many have so light a fancy, that they fly from one thing to another in their reasoning, and before they have finished their syllogism have formed a conclusion, and from that conclusion have flown to another,[3] and think they are arguing most subtly, while they have no principle to start from, and see nothing in their imagination that is really true.[4] And with these, the Philosopher says, we are not to trouble ourselves, nor are we to have anything to do with them, saying, in the first of the *Physics*, that with him who denies first principles it is not fitting to dispute. And of such are many idiots, who do not know their A B C,

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[1] *Ethics*, i. 4. Aristotle quotes Hesiod, who says—

"He that is not wise himself, nor can
Hearken to wisdom, is a useless man."

[2] "And this blind life of theirs is so debased,
They envious are of every other fate.
No fame of them the world permits to be;
Justice and pity equally despise them."

(*Inf.*, 3. 46.)

"For to men who fly with [the wings of] desire rather than the consideration of the reason, this always follows—that they, being ill disposed, and the light of reason set aside, are led, like blind men, by their affections, and pertinaciously deny their blindness" (*De Mon.*, iii. 3).

[4] "As people that, not sleeping, dream."

(*Par.*, 29. 82.)

In the *Paradiso*, c. 2, Beatrice says—

"Observe me well, how through this place I come
Unto the truth thou wishest,"

inculcating the necessity of investigating *first principles* in every discussion, as in *De Mon.*, i. 2, Dante says, "But because every truth, which is not a principle, is manifested by the truth of some other principle, it is necessary in every question to observe that first principle to which our analysis must return in order to certify those that come after."

and yet would argue on geometry and astrology and physics.

8. And on account of evil disposition or weakness of body, the mind may be unhealthy; either for lack of some principle at birth,[1] as in idiots, or because of some disturbance of the brain, as in madmen. And the law alludes to this infirmity of the mind, when the *Inforziato*[2] says, "In him who makes a will, health of mind, not of body, is required at the time of his making it." Therefore to those minds who are neither infirm through evil disposition of body nor of soul, but are free, untrammelled,[3] and healthy in the light of truth, I say that it is manifest that the opinion of the people aforesaid is vain, that is, without value.

9. Afterwards the canzone adds that I thus judge them to be false and vain, and so confute them; and this is done where it says, "*And thus I brand them false.*" And afterwards I say that we must set about explaining the truth; and I say that I mean to explain it, that is, in what Nobility consists, and how we may know the man in whom it is to be found; and this I say here, "*And now I wish to say after my thoughts.*"

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[1] See *Conv.*, i. 1, par. 2; iv. 23, par. 5.

[2] The second part of the *Digest*, which is divided into *Old*, *Enforced*, and *New*. The law quoted by Dante is in lib. 28, tit. 1, 2: "*In eo qui testatur, ejus temporis quo testamentum facit*, integritas mentis, non sanitas corporis exigenda est."

[3] Dante sometimes uses the word *spediti* in the sense of "unobstructed" or "unimpeded," as in *Purg.*, 20. 5—

"Onward moved my Leader,
Through unobstructed places, round the rock."

Chapter XVI.

1. "The king shall rejoice in God, and all they shall be praised who swear by him, because the mouth of them that speak evil is closed."[1] These words I may well set down here, because every true king should love truth above all things. Wherefore it is written in the Book of Wisdom, "Love the light of wisdom, ye who are before the people;"[2] and the light of wisdom is truth. I say, then, that every king shall rejoice, because we have confuted that most false and most harmful opinion of wicked and mistaken men, who up to this time have been speaking iniquitously of Nobility.

2. It is now fitting to go on to speak of the truth, according to the division already made in the third chapter of the present Book. This second part, therefore, which begins, "*I say that every virtue takes its rise*," is intended to treat of Nobility according to the truth; and it is divided into two parts; for in the first it means to show what this Nobility is; and in the second, how we may recognize him who possesses it; and this second part begins, "*The soul that this high virtue doth adorn.*"

3. The first part is again divided into two; because in the first part we seek for certain things necessary to illustrate the definition of Nobility; in the second

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[1] Ps. lxiii. 11, "But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory; but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped" (English version).

[2] See note 1, par. 9, ch. 6, book iv.

we seek for the definition itself, and this second part begins, "*Nobility exists where virtue dwells.*"

4. And, to begin such a treatise perfectly, we must understand two things. One is, what this word "Nobility" means, considered simply by itself; the other is, what way must be taken to arrive at the above-named definition. I say, then, that if we wish to regard the common use of language, by this word "Nobility" is meant the perfection of each thing after its own nature,[1] wherefore it is not predicated of man alone, but, indeed, of all things; for men say "a noble stone," "a noble house," "a noble falcon," or anything that is perfect of its kind. And therefore Solomon says, in Ecclesiastes, "Blessed is the land whose king is noble,"[2] which is no other than to say "whose king is perfect," according to the perfection of soul and of body; and this is shown by what he says previously, where he says, "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child!" that is, not a perfect man; not being a child only in years, but in ill-regulated habits, and by an imperfect life, as the Philosopher has taught us in the first of the *Ethics*.[3]

5. There are, indeed, some fools who think that by this word "noble" is meant that which is known and talked of by many; and they say it comes from a verb that means "to know," that is, *nosco;* and this is most false;[4] because, if it were so, the things which

[1] See *Conv.*, i. 5, par. 2.

[2] Eccles. x. 17, "Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles!" (English version).

[3] "It makes no difference whether he be a youth in age or a novice in character; for the defect arises not from age, but from his life and pursuits being according to the dictates of passion" (*Ethics*, i. 3).

[4] "On the contrary, with all deference to so great a man, most *true*," say the Milanese editors. And they bid us observe that *nobile*,

of their kind were most known and talked of would be the most noble of that kind; and thus the obelisk of St. Peter's[1] would be the most noble stone in the world; and Asdente, the cobbler of Parma,[2] would be more noble than any of his fellow-citizens, and Alboino della Scala[3] would be more noble than Guido da Castello di Reggio;[4] whereas all these things are

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applied to a family, was always used in a good sense, as "noble," but that in other cases it meant simply "noted," and might be used in a good or bad sense, as we read in Ovid, *Amor.*, ii. 18, "Et Paris est illec et adultera, *nobile* crimen." And Uguccione, in his *Liber Deriv.*, says (under the word *nosco*), "*Item*, a noto, *notabilis*, et a notabilis per sincopem *nobilis*, quia facile notatur, scilicet *cum nomen et genus cognoscitur*. Quod autem dicitur *nobilis*, quasi *non vilis*, etheria est."

[1] The obelisk which used to surmount the cupola of the ancient church of St. Peter's at Rome; not the one which stands in the piazza to-day, that having been placed there by Sixtus V., 1583 (Giuliani).

[2] "Behold Asdente,
Who now unto his leather and his thread
Would fain have stuck, but he too late repents."
(*Inf.*, 20. 118.)

A cobbler of Parma, who lived in the time of Frederic II., and was celebrated for his pretended gift of divining the future. Another of the date-points of the *Convito*. Here Asdente is mentioned as living, but as he is put into the *Inferno* (and therefore must have died before 1300), this book must have been written *before* 1300." This is Fraticelli's opinion, but Giuliani points out that the mention of Asdente here does not necessarily involve his being alive, and that, from the way he is spoken of in the *Inferno*, he had probably died very lately, that is, in the early part of 1300.

[3] Alboino della Scala, died 1311 (Vellutello says 1312). From the contemptuous way in which he is mentioned here, Scartazzini is sure he is not "the mighty Lombard" of *Par.*, 17. 71. Alberto della Scala, who died in 1301, left three sons, Bartolommeo, Alboino, and Can Francesco, afterwards known as Can Grande. Bartolommeo was soon confirmed by the people as lord of the city, but died in three years (1304). Alboino was proclaimed in his place, but obliged to share the government with Can. Their united reign lasted till 1311, when Alboino died, leaving Can Grande in undisputed authority. That Bartolommeo was the "gran Lombardo" with whom Dante took refuge (sometime between 1302 and 1304) seems conclusively proved by these dates.

[4] Guido da Castello di Reggio, "the simple Lombard" of *Purg.*, 16. 125. The French were in the habit of calling all Italians *Lombards*, and Guido was named "the simple" from his great frankness. He

most false; and therefore it is also most false that "noble" comes from *nosco*, but it comes from "non-vile;" whence "noble" is almost the same as "non-vile."[1]

6. This is the perfection meant by the Philosopher in the seventh of the *Physics*, when he says, "Each thing is absolutely perfect when united to its own special quality; because then it is absolutely perfect according to its own nature. Whence the circle can be called perfect, when it is a true circle, that is, when united to its special quality, because then its nature is complete, and it can be called a noble circle." And this is when it contains a point which is equally distant from [every part of] its circumference. That circle which is egg-shaped loses this quality, and is not noble, neither is that one noble which has almost the shape of the full moon, because it is not perfect of its kind.

7. And thus we may plainly see that this word, that is, "Nobility," generally expresses in all things the perfection of their nature; and this is the definition we were to seek for in the first place, in order that we might the better enter upon that part of this book which is intended to explain it. In the second place,

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was noted for his magnificent liberality. He shared the hospitality of Can Grande with Dante; and Gazadi da Reggio, an historian of the fourteenth century, gives this curious account of Can Grande's guests. "The two whom he invited oftenest were *Gherardo* (*sic*) da Castello, surnamed from his frankness 'the simple Lombard,' and Dante Alighieri, a personage then (!) very celebrated, with whose genius he was charmed." He is one of the "three old men" of *Purg.*, 16. 121; but, as Dante begins "old age" at forty-five, he need not have been too old to have been with Dante at Can Grande's court even as late as 1314.

[1] Dante himself uses the word in many senses, as here it is identified with "perfection," in ch. 14 with "rank," in ch. 13 with "reason," etc.

we must see what way we should take to arrive at the definition of human nobility, with which our present discourse is concerned. I say, then, that because in things of one kind, such as men, we cannot define their highest perfection by essential principles, we must define and recognize it by their effects;[1] and therefore we read in the Gospel of St. Matthew that Christ says, "Beware of false prophets; by their fruits ye shall know them."[2] And by the direct way, this definition we are seeking is to be known by its fruits, which are moral and intellectual virtues, of which our nobility is the seed, as will be plainly shown in our definition of it.

8. And these are the two things which it behoved us to see before we went on to others, as has been said before in this chapter.

CHAPTER XVII.

1. THE two things being understood which it seemed needful to understand before going on with the text, we have now to proceed to its explanation, and this begins—

> "I say that all the virtues take their rise
> From one sole root:
> That primal virtue, which makes mankind blest
> In acting it;"

and I add, "*Which is, as in the Ethics we may read, The elective habit,*" stating the whole definition of the moral virtues after the definition of the Philosopher in the second of the *Ethics*;[3] wherein two

[1] *Conv.*, iii. 8, par. 8; iv. 10, par. 3. [2] Matt. vii. 15, 16.
[3] "Moral virtue arises from habit, whence also it takes its name,

things are to be specially noted: one is, that every virtue springs from one principle; the other is, that *all the virtues* means the moral virtues, of which we are speaking; and this is shown when it says, "*Which is, as in the Ethics we may read.*"

2. Here we must observe that our most proper fruits are the moral virtues; because on every side they are within our power, and these are differently distinguished and enumerated by different philosophers. But because, where the divine opinion of Aristotle opens its mouth, it seems to me that we should pass by that of all other men, wishing to say what these [moral virtues] are, I will run over them briefly, according to his opinion. These virtues are eleven, as named by the aforesaid philosopher.

3. The first is called *Fortitude*,[1] which is a weapon and a curb designed to moderate our boldness and our timidity in things which are the ruin of our life.

4. The second is *Temperance*, which is a law and curb for our greediness, or for our excessive abstinence in the things which preserve our life.

5. The third is *Liberality*, which is a moderator in the giving and receiving of temporal things.

6. The fourth is *Munificence*,[2] which is a moderator

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ethics being only slightly altered from *ethos*—habit (*Ethics*, ii. 1; and see also ch. 6).

[1] "Behold the place
Where thou with fortitude must arm thyself."
(*Inf.*, 34. 20.)

[2] *Magnificenza* is often used by Dante in the sense of "munificence," as in *Par.*, 17. 85—

"So recognized shall his *magnificence*
Become hereafter,"

where the munificence of Can Grande is spoken of.

of great expenditures, making and sustaining them up to certain limits.

7. The fifth is *Magnanimity*, which is a moderator and acquirer of great honours and fame.

8. The sixth is *Love of Honour*, which is our moderator and regulator in the honours of this world.

9. The seventh is *Meekness*, which moderates our anger or our too great patience with our outward trials.

10. The eighth is *Affability*, which makes us live on good terms with others.

11. The ninth is called *Truth*,[1] which makes us moderate in over-praising or over-blaming ourselves in conversation.

12. The tenth is called *Eutrapelia*[2] [discretion], which controls us in our pleasures, making us use them discreetly.

13. The eleventh is *Justice*,[3] which disposes us to love and practise righteousness in all things.

14. And each of these virtues has two collateral enemies, that is, vices, one of excess, one of default. And these [virtues] are the mean between those [extremes], and they all come from one origin, that is, our habit of worthy choice. Therefore we may say generally of all of them, that they are the elective

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[1] "The truth that is confounded here below." (*Par.*, 29. 74.)

[2] "From *eu*, 'well,' and *trépo*, 'to turn,' meaning 'graceful wit' (or 'tact')" (*Ethics*, iv. 8).

[3] "Justice in itself, and considered according to its own nature, is a certain rectitude and rule which drives away all wrong" (*De Mon.*, i. 13). "Justice is perfect virtue, not absolutely but relatively, and neither the evening nor the morning star is so admirable" (*Ethics*, v. 1). And see *Par.*, 19. 88, where justice is made identical with the Divine will.

habit of the proper mean. And these are they that make man blest, or rather happy, in their practice, as the Philosopher says in the first of the *Ethics*, where, defining happiness, he says that "happiness is action according to virtue in the perfect life." [1]

15. *Prudence*, that is, good sense, is indeed included by many among the moral virtues,[2] but Aristotle counts it among the intellectual,[3] although it is the guide of the moral virtues, and points out the way by which they are formed, and without it they could not exist.

16. Nevertheless, we must know that we can have two kinds of happiness in this life, according to two different ways, one good, one best, which lead us thereto; one is the active life, and the other the contemplative. The latter (although by the active life, as has been said, we may attain to great happiness) leads us to the highest felicity and blessedness, as the Philosopher proves in the tenth of the *Ethics*.[4]

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[1] "Happiness is a kind of energy of the soul according to virtue" (*Ethics*, i. 9). "We have almost defined happiness as a kind of well-living and well-doing (ibid., 8). "The blessedness of this life consists in the operations of our proper virtue" (*De Mon.*, iii. 15).

[2] In *Purg.*, 29. 132, *et seq.*, Dante describes the other three cardinal virtues as following the lead of Prudence, who has three eyes in her head, as seeing the past, present, and future. And in ch. 27 of this book, he says to be prudent is to have a good memory of things past, a good knowledge of things present, and a wise providence for the future. Herein he follows St. Thomas Aquinas.

[3] Aristotle classes Prudence among the intellectual virtues (*Ethics*, vi. 8), but nevertheless he says, in ch. 13 of the same book, that prudence and moral virtue are inseparable. "Virtue is not only the habit according to, but in conjunction with, right reason; and prudence is the same as right reason on these subjects."

[4] Book x. ch. 7, where Aristotle calls the contemplative life "*divine*, as compared to human life." In the description of Rachel and Leah (*Purg.*, 27), Dante symbolizes the contemplative and the active life, as he makes the earthly Paradise a figure of the latter, the celestial

And Christ confirms it with His own lips in the Gospel of Luke, where He answers Martha, saying to her, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; verily, one thing alone is needful;" that is, that which thou art doing; and He adds, "Mary has chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her."[1] And Mary, as is said before in the words of the Gospel, sitting[2] at the feet of Christ, took no heed to the service of the house, but only listened to the words of the Saviour. For if we explain this morally, our Lord wished thereby to show us that the contemplative life is the best, although the active life is good; this is plain to all who will attentively give their minds to the Gospel words. Nevertheless, some may say, arguing against me: Since the happiness of the contemplative life is more excellent than that of the active, and both may be, and are, the fruit and end of Nobility, why not rather proceed [in the argument] by the way of the intellectual virtues instead of the moral? To which it may be answered briefly, that all teaching must have regard to the capacity of the learner, and must lead him in the way which is easiest. Wherefore, since the moral virtues seem to be, and are, more common and more in demand than the others, being known by their external aspect,[3] it is more useful and

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Paradise of the former, defining the terrestrial as in note 1, and the celestial as consisting in "the fruition of the Divine aspect, to which our proper virtue cannot rise unaided."

[1] Luke x. 41, 42.

[2] "Sitting," to signify the act of contemplation, as Leah (the active life) speaks of Rachel (the contemplative life) as "sitting all day long" (see *Purg.*, 27. 105). In the *De Mon.*, i. 5, Dante speaks of man devoting himself to the contemplative life—"sitting, and in repose."

[3] Being more readily recognized by their external effects.

more fitting to proceed by that method than by the other; for we can arrive at a knowledge of the bees as well by reasoning from the fruit of their wax as from the fruit of their honey,[1] although both proceed from them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1. IN the preceding chapter it has been determined that all the moral virtues come from one principle, which is *a good and habitual choice;* and this is implied by the present text, as far as the part that begins: "*I say, then, that Nobility perforce.*" In this part, then, we proceed by the way of probability[2] to learn that all the aforesaid virtues, taken singly or collectively, proceed from Nobility, as an effect from its cause; and this is founded upon a philosophical proposition, which says that when two things are found united in one, either both of them must be derived from a third, or else the one from the other, as effect from cause; because a self-caused and primary thing can have but one cause; and if these things are not both either the effect of some third thing, or one of the other, then they must both have been primary and self-caused, which is impossible. The text says, then, that Nobility and the virtue like it [*i.e.* moral virtue] agree in this, that both imply praise of him to whom they are imputed, and this is meant where

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[1] Although it is the honey by which we know them best, as the product most commonly used. This must be supplied, says Pederzini, to complete the analogy which Dante had in mind.

[2] Instead of necessary demonstration.

it says, "*Because in all they say The two agree, having but one effect.*"

2. And then it concludes with the pith of the above proposition, and says that therefore one must proceed from the other, or both from a third; and adds, that it is rather to be supposed that one should come from the other, than that both should come from a third, if it appear that the one is of equal value to the other, and even greater; and this is where it says, "But if the one were worth all of the other." And here we must observe that we do not proceed by necessary demonstration (as if we should say that, cold being the generative principle of water,[1] [it is going to rain [2]] when we see the clouds), but by an appropriate and beautiful induction. For if there are in us many praiseworthy things, and one is the principle of them all, reason demands that they should be reduced to [or derived from] that principle which comprehends most of these things. And such a principle can be more reasonably spoken of as the origin of all the rest, than one which is less comprehensive can be taken as its source.[3] Because as the trunk of the tree which comprehends all the branches

[1] "Well knowest thou how in the air is gathered
That humid vapour that to water turns,
Soon as it rises where the cold doth reach it."
(*Purg.*, 5. 109.)

"The water . . .
Restored by vapour that the cold condenses."
(*Purg.*, 28. 122.)

For the old idea that the primitive generation of water was by cold, see Seneca, *Quest. Nat.*, lib. iii. 9; and Aristotle, *De Generat. et Corrupt.*, lib. ii. 4. Compare also Gen. ii. 5, 6 (Scartazzini).

[2] The words in brackets are interpolated by Giuliani as necessary to the sense, which is indicated by the above quotations.

[3] One of the most involved and corrupt passages of the *Convito*, in which I have followed the reading of Witte.

ought to be called their principle and cause, and not the branches the cause of the trunk, so Nobility, which comprehends all virtues (as cause comprehends effect), and many other of our praiseworthy actions, ought to be so held that virtue should be derived from it, rather than from some third thing which may exist in us.

3. Finally, it says that the foregoing argument (that is, that every moral virtue comes from one root, and that such virtue and Nobility agree in one thing, as has been said above; and that, therefore, one should be derived from the other, or both from a third; and that, if the one should be worth as much as the other and more, that this one should be [held as] the source, rather than the third thing) is all presupposed, that is, arranged and prepared for, by what comes before it. And thus ends this verse, and this present part.

CHAPTER XIX.

1. SINCE in the preceding part three specific things were discussed, necessary to the definition of which we are speaking, it behoves us to go on to the following part, which begins, "*Nobility exists where virtue dwells.*" And this is meant to be divided into two parts. In the first, a certain thing is proved that was alluded to before, and left unproved; in the second, in concluding, we find the definition we have been seeking; and this second part begins, "*Therefore from her as cometh perse from black.*"

2. In evidence of the first part, we must recall to mind what has been said above—that if Nobility is

of greater extent and value than virtue, virtue will be more properly derived from Nobility. This is proved in this part (that is, that Nobility extends farther), and it gives the heavens [and the stars] as an example,[1] saying that, wherever virtue is, there is Nobility. And here we should observe that (as is written in the Law,[2] and held as a rule therein) those things which are self-evident need no proof; and nothing is more evident than that Nobility exists wherever virtue[3] is, for everything of virtuous nature we hear commonly called noble.[4] It says, then, "*As that is heaven where we see the stars;*" but this cannot be true and the converse also, that wherever the stars are there heaven is; so there is Nobility wherever there is virtue, and not virtue wherever there is Nobility, which, by a beautiful and appropriate example, is compared to heaven. For truly it is a heaven, wherein many different stars do shine; there shine the intellectual and moral virtues; there shine the good dispositions bestowed by Nature, that is, to piety[5] and religion, and the laudable passions, such as shame[6] and compassion,[7] and many others; there shine the good gifts of the body, that is, beauty, strength, and almost perpetual health. And so many are the stars that extend through this heaven, that it is certainly not to be wondered at, if they produce many and divers fruits [*i.e.* effects] in human nobility,[8]

[1] See third canzone, ver. 6. [2] In the *Digest*.

[3] "The nobility of man is virtue alone" (Juvenal, *Sat.*, viii. 20). Dante quotes this passage from Juvenal in illustration of the same idea in *De Mon.*, ii. 5.

[4] See *Conv.*, i. 5, par. 4. [5] *Conv.*, ii. 11, par. 2, note 1.

[6] *Conv.*, iv. 25, par. 2.

[7] "Compassion is the mother of benevolence" (*Conv.*, i. 1, par. 4).

[8] The concrete nobility of humanity, as distinguished from the

so various are their natures and their powers, comprised and united in one simple substance, by means of which [various powers], as throughout different branches, are produced different fruits. Indeed, here I make bold to say that human nobility, as far as the variety of its fruits is considered, excels that of the angels, although the angelic may be more divine in its unity.[1]

3. And this our Nobility, which bears so many and such varied fruits, the Psalmist recognized when he made his psalm beginning, "O Lord our God, how admirable is Thy name in all the earth!" in that part where he praises man, marvelling, as it were, at the Divine affection for this human creature, and saying, "What is man, that Thou, God, visitest him? Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour, and hast set him over the works of Thy hands."[2] Verily, then, beautiful and appropriate was the comparison of human nobility to the heavens!

4. Then when it [the canzone] says, "*And we in*

abstract idea represented by "this heaven," and therefore it seems to me unnecessary to substitute "the human *creature*" with Giuliani, or "human *nature*" with Pederzini.

[1] The angelic nature is pure intelligence (*Conv.*, ii. 5, par. 1), and therefore nearest to "that first, noblest, and simplest virtue, which is pure intellect, that is, God" (*Conv.*, iii. 7). But human nature must partake of the threefold nature of man, as explained in *Conv.*, iii. 3; *De Mon.*, i. 4; and *De Vulg. El.*, ii. 2. In the latter book, Dante says, "We must know that there are three souls in man, the vegetable, the animal, and the rational, so that he follows three paths; for, according to the vegetable soul, he seeks that which is useful, wherein he resembles the plants; according to the animal, he seeks that which is pleasant, wherein he resembles the beasts; and according to the rational, he seeks that which is virtuous, in which he goes alone, or rather, accompanied by the angelic nature; so that all we do appears to be done in these three ways."

[2] Ps. viii. 1, 4–6. The same passage is quoted in *De Mon.*, i. 5.

women and the age of youth,"[1] etc., it proves what I mean, showing that Nobility may extend to places where virtue does not exist.[2] And saying afterwards, "*We see this saving power,*" it intimates that Nobility (which is, indeed, true salvation) exists where *shame* is, that is, the fear of dishonour, as in women and young men, in whom shame is good and praiseworthy; which shame is not virtue, but a certain worthy passion. And it says, "*And we in women and the age of youth,*" that is, in young men; because, as the Philosopher thinks, in the fourth of the *Ethics*,[3] "shame is neither laudable nor befitting in old nor in studious men," for it befits them to keep themselves from such things as lead to shame. From youths and women we do not require so much, I mean so much discretion; and therefore it is praiseworthy in them to fear the dishonour of a fault; for this fear comes from nobility. And this fear may be considered and may be called nobility, as impudence is vulgarity and ignobleness. Therefore it is a good and excellent sign of nobility, in children and young people, when, after a fault, their face is tinged with shame,[4] which is then the fruit of true nobility.

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[1] According to Dante, from the twenty-fifth to the forty-fifth year.

[2] "Nobility makes part of their fear of shame," says Dante in the canzone; and goes on to explain this shame to be not exactly a *virtue*, but *right feeling* (see *Conv.*, iv. 25).

[3] *Ethics*, iv. 9. But Aristotle does not mention the *studious;* only the old and the good.

[4] "I said it, somewhat with that colour tinged,
Which makes a man of pardon sometimes worthy."
(*Purg.*, 5. 20.)

"Glowing all over *noble* shame."
(Tennyson's *Princess.*)

(See *Conv.*, iv. 25, par. 3.)

CHAPTER XX.

1. WHEN it continues, "*Therefore from her as cometh perse from black*," [1] the text proceeds to the definition of Nobility that we are seeking; wherein we may see what this Nobility is, of which so many people speak so mistakenly. It says, in conclusion from what has been said before, that all virtues (or rather their first parent, that is, the elective habit, of the proper mean) come from her, that is, from Nobility. And it takes an example from colours, saying, "*as cometh perse from black*," so this virtue springs from Nobility. Perse is a colour composed of purple and black, but the black predominates, and the colour takes its name therefrom; and so virtue is a thing composed of nobility and passion, but because nobility predominates therein, virtue is named from her, and is called goodness.[2]

2. Then afterwards it argues that no one, because he can say, "*By race I too belong to her*," should believe himself to possess Nobility, unless its fruits are in him. And it gives a reason for this immediately, by saying that those who have this grace, that is, this divine thing, are almost like gods, without stain of vice. And it can be given by none save God alone, with whom is no respect of persons, as the Divine Scriptures show. Nor does it [the text] seem to any to speak too loftily when it says, "*For*

[1] See note to ver. 6 of the third canzone.

[2] In all this paragraph *denominata* should be translated "classed with." *Perse* is not *named* from black, but classed with it, as a dark colour, and so virtue is classed with nobility and called goodness.

they are almost gods," because (as has been said in the seventh chapter of the third Book) as there are men who are most vile and bestial, so there are men who are most noble and divine.[1] And this Aristotle proves in the seventh of the *Ethics* by the text of Homer the poet.[2] So that let not the Uberti of Florence,[3] or the Visconti of Milan,[4] say, "Because I am of such a family I am noble;" for the divine seed does not fall upon a *family*, that is, a *race*, but upon individuals; and, as shall be proved hereafter, the race does not ennoble the individuals, but the individuals ennoble the race.

3. Then when I say, "*For God alone doth give it to that soul,*" etc., there comes in the question of the receiver, that is, the subject upon whom this divine gift shall descend (for it is indeed a divine gift), according to the words of the apostle, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights."[5] It says, then, that God alone imparts this grace to the soul of him whom He sees perfectly fitted and prepared in all his being

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[1] And therefore Dante puts such men, whatever their creed, in the Elysiums of the Inferno and Purgatorio (see *Inf.*, 4; *Purg.*, 7).

[2] *Ethics*, vii. 1, where Aristotle speaks of a sort of heroic and divine virtue, such as Homer has made Priam attribute to Hector—

"Nor did he seem
The son of mortal man, but of a god."
(*Il.*, 24. 258.)

Dante quotes the same passage *apropos* of Beatrice, in the *Vita Nuova*, § 2.

[3] The Uberti family was one of the noblest in Florence, and might almost have been called the fathers of the city, says the *Ottimo Comento*. They were "undone by their own pride" (*Par.*, 16. 109), and to them belonged Farinata (*Inf.*, 10. 32), one of the greatest of the Ghibelline leaders.

[4] One of the noble families of Milan, alluded to in *Purg.*, 8. 80.

[5] James i. 17.

to receive His divine influence. Because, according to the Philosopher in the second *Of the Soul*, "things should be adapted to the powers acting upon them, in order to receive their influence." Therefore, if the soul be imperfectly constituted, it is not disposed to receive this divine and blessed influence, just as when a precious stone is badly constituted or imperfect it cannot receive celestial virtue, as that noble Guido Guinicelli says, in one of his canzoni which begins, "Within the gentle heart Love shelters him." [1]

4. The soul, therefore, may be badly suited to its body,[2] either through defect of temperament,[3] or perhaps defect of time;[4] and such a one this divine ray can never illuminate. And they whose souls are deprived of this light, may be said to be like valleys

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[1] Here, again, "gentle" is synonymous with "noble." Guido Guinicelli (1220–1276), called by Dante the greatest poet of his time, belonged to a princely Bolognese family. He married a lady named Beatrice, and, having adhered to the imperial cause, was sent into exile, and died two years afterwards. Dante speaks of him in *Purg.*, 26, where he calls him "the father of me and of my betters," and in *Purg.*, 11; also in *De Vulg. El.*, where he gives him the epithet of "greatest." The lines referred to are—

"The fire of Love comes to the gentle heart
Like as its virtue to a precious stone;
To which no star its influence can impart
Till it is made a pure thing by the sun.
For when the sun hath smit
From out its essence that which there was vile,
The star endoweth it."

(Rossetti's trans.)

[2] "This soul of mine
That cometh hither, wearied with its body."
(*Purg.*, 2. 110.)

[3] "The soul of every brute and of the plants,
By its potential temperament attracts
The ray and motion of the holy lights."
(*Par.*, 7. 139.)

[4] *Time* used in the sense of the propitious moment.

turned towards the north, or like subterranean caves, where the light of the sun can never enter unless reflected from some other part that is illuminated.[1]

5. Finally, it concludes by saying that from what has been said before (that is, that the virtues are the fruit of Nobility, and that God imparts this Nobility to the well-prepared soul) to some, that is, to those who possess intelligence, who are but few, it is evident that human nobility is no other than "*that seed of happiness That God doth plant in the well-fitted soul*," that is, whose body is in every respect perfectly prepared for it.[2] For if the fruit of nobility and happiness is the sweetness gained by them, it is evident that Nobility is the seed of happiness, as has been said. And if we observe carefully, we see that this definition comprehends all four causes, that is, the *material*, the *formal*, the *efficient*, and the *final;* the *material*, where it says the "*well-fitted soul*," which is the material and subject of nobility; the *formal*, where it says "*that seed;*" the *efficient*, where it says "*that God doth plant;*" and the *final*, where it says "*of happiness.*"

6. And thus is defined that goodness[3] of ours which descends upon us from the supreme and

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[1] This passage is more fully explained in the following chapters.

[2] "That infinite and most ineffable Good
That dwells on high, flows naturally to love,
As to a shining body comes a sunbeam.
So much it gives itself as it finds ardour."
(*Purg.*, 15. 70.)

[3] Or *nobility*. In the *De Monarchia*, Dante uses "nobility" sometimes in the more worldly sense of *rank*, where he quotes Aristotle as saying that nobility is virtue united to ancient wealth—a definition delicately distinguished from that of Frederick II., as *good-breeding* united to ancient wealth (see *De Mon.*, ii. 3).

spiritual Virtue,[1] in the same manner that virtue descends upon a [precious] stone, from a most noble celestial body.

CHAPTER XXI.

1. IN order that we may have a more perfect knowledge of human goodness (as it is in us the principle of all good, which is called Nobility), we must explain, in this special chapter, how this goodness descends upon us; first [demonstrating it] in the natural way, and then in the theological, that is, the divine and spiritual way.[2]

2. In the first place, we must know that man is composed of soul and body;[3] but of the soul is that [nobility], as we have said, which is as the seed of the Divine virtue. Nevertheless, by different philosophers the difference in our souls has been explained

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[1] "The first soul
That ever the First Virtue did create."
(*Par.*, 26. 84.)

[2] First by philosophical arguments to convince the human reason, and then by demonstrations founded upon divine authority to carry conviction to the soul.

"What *reason* seeth here,
Myself can tell thee; beyond that await
For Beatrice, since 'tis a work of *faith*."
(*Purg.*, 18. 46.)

"The large outpouring
Of Holy Spirit, which has been diffused
Upon the ancient parchments and the new,
A syllogism is, which proved it to me
With such acuteness, that compared therewith
All demonstrations seem to me obtuse."
(*Par.*, 24. 91.)

These are "the eyes" and "the smile" of Wisdom (see book iii. ch. 15), the demonstrations that convince our reason, and the "persuasions," or intuitions, in which the inner light shines upon the soul.

[3] "His two essential parts, soul and body" (*De Mon.*, iii. 15).

in various ways; for Avicenna and Algazel[1] maintained that souls were noble or ignoble of themselves, and from their beginning. Plato and others held that they proceeded from the stars, and were more or less noble, according to the nobility of their star.[2] Pythagoras held that all souls partook of the same nobility, not only human souls, but with them those of the lower animals, and of the plants, and of minerals; and that all the difference was in the bodies, not in the form.[3] If each one were to defend his opinion, it might be that truth would be seen in all of them. But as at first sight they seem rather far from the truth, it is best not to proceed according to them, but according to the opinion of Aristotle and the Peripatetics, and therefore I say that when the human seed falls into its receptacle, that is, the matrix,[4] it carries with it the virtue of the generating soul, and the virtue of the [controlling] heaven,[5] and

[1] See notes to *Conv.*, ii. 14.

[2] "He says the soul unto its star returns,
Believing it to have been severed thence,
Whenever nature gave it as a form."
(*Par.*, 4. 52.)

[3] Pederzini says that this opinion of Pythagoras as to the equality of all souls is not to be found in his works, but is a necessary deduction from his system. He held that God is the life and activity of everything: the soul of animated beings (including plants), and the form of the informed, whether immediately, or through the medium of the Intelligences, eternal emanations of Himself. Therefore all souls and all forms were alike divine. *Form*, of course, being understood in the scholastic sense, as the *essence* of a thing; as St. Thomas Aquinas says, "This principle, by which we think, is the *form* of the body, whether it be called intellect or intellectual *soul*" (*Summa Theol.*, p. i. qu. 76).

[4] Compare the corresponding passage in *Purg.*, 25. 37–60.

[5] The star (or heaven) then in the ascendant. See *Purg.*, 30. 110—

"Those great wheels
That destine every seed unto some end,
According as the stars are in conjunction.'

the virtue belonging to its elements, that is, its temperament.[1] It prepares and matures the material[2] for the formative virtue given by the generating soul, and the formative virtue prepares the organs for the celestial virtue which produces, from the potentiality of the seed, the soul in life. This, as soon as produced, receives from the motive power of the heaven[3] its possible intellect,[4] which creates potentially in itself all universal forms as they exist in its producer, but fewer in number in proportion as this producer is removed from the Primal Intelligence.[5]

3. Let no one wonder if I speak in a manner difficult to be understood; for to myself it appears a marvel how such production can be reasoned out and apprehended by the intellect; nor is it a thing

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[1] Some read here *alimenti* instead of *elementi*, considering it to mean "the virtue belonging to its *nourishment*;" but Dante expressly says that he means the constitution or temperament of the seed (see ch. 23, par. 7, for the description of the elements of our constitution).

[2] Upon which it falls.

[3] That is, the celestial Intelligence of the controlling heaven.

[4] The passive intellect, or understanding, as distinguished from the active intellect or reason (see Appendix to this chapter).

[5] That is, God; the intellectual power of the Intelligences (or emanations) diminishing in proportion to their distance from Him. Witte says that Dante partakes here of the error of Averrhoës, which he rejects in *Purg.*, 25. 65, as the error "of a wiser man" than himself; that is, that the possible intellect descends from the celestial Intelligence (or motive power of the heaven), and not directly from God. Also in *Par.*, 7. 142, he speaks of the souls of plants and animals as attracting, by their potential temperament, the action of the heavens, and continues—

> "But your own life *immeaiately* inspires
> Supreme Beneficence."

In a note to this passage, Scartazzini quotes St. Thomas Aquinas as saying, "*Quidam poserunt quod Angeli, secundum quod operantur in virtute Dei, causant animas rationales. Sed hoc est omnino impossibile, et a fide alienum*" (*Summa Theol.*, p. i. qu. 90, art. 2).

This seems another proof that this book of the *Convito* antedated the *Commedia*.

to be set forth by speech, I mean especially by the common speech;[1] because I would say with the Apostle, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"[2]

4. And because the nature of the seed may be more or less good, and the disposition of the recipient more or less good; and the disposition of the heaven to produce this effect may be good, better, or best (varying with the constellations, which change continually); it befalls that from the human seed and these [various] powers, a more or less pure soul is produced. And according to its purity, the virtue of its possible intellect descends upon it, as has been said, and in the manner described. And if it happen, that, by the purity of the receiving soul, the intellectual virtue be absolutely separate and free from any corporeal shadow, then the Divine goodness multiplies in her as in a thing worthy to receive it; and further it multiplies in the soul [endowed] with this intelligence, according to her capacity of reception;[3] and this [heavenly influence] is that seed of felicity of which we are now speaking.

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[1] "The Latin can express many conceptions of the human mind that the vulgar tongue cannot" (see *Conv.*, i. 5).

[2] Rom. xi. 33. Quoted also in *De Mon.*, ii. 9.

[3] "For Good, so far as good, when comprehended
Doth straight enkindle love, and so much greater
As more of goodness in itself it holds."
(*Par.*, 26. 28.)

"My sight, becoming purified,
Was entering more and more into the ray
Of the High Light which of itself is true."
(*Par.*, 33. 53.)

The purer the soul, the more capable of receiving the influx of Divine goodness, which constitutes "the seed of happiness."

5. And this agrees with the saying of Tullius in his *Old Age*, where, speaking in the person of Cato, he says, "Therefore a celestial soul descends upon us, leaving its most high abode for a place that is opposed to the Divine nature and to eternity." And in such a soul is its own virtue, and the intellectual, and the divine; that is, this influence just mentioned; wherefore it is written in the book *Of Causes*,[1] "Every noble soul has three methods of operation: the animal, the intellectual, and the divine." And some are of such an opinion that they say, that if all the aforesaid powers should co-operate in the production of a soul according to their most favourable disposition, the Deity would descend upon that soul in such fulness,[2] that it would be almost another God incarnate. And this is almost all that can be said in the natural way.[3]

6. In the theological way it may be said, that as the supreme Deity, that is, God, sees His creature

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[1] Giuliani says this is from the *De Causis* of Albertus Magnus, lib. ii. 1, 15, and that Dante has wrested the words to a meaning not the author's. But according to other (and evidently, in this case, better) authority, the quotation is from a book of the same name, transmitted to the scholastics by the Hebrews of Spain, in the twelfth century, as a work of Aristotle's, and as such it gained immense credit and universal influence, and was included among his works, not only in the manuscript, but also in the first printed editions. In the Cominiana edit. of 1560 it forms vol. vi. Albertus Magnus was the first to suspect that the book was not by Aristotle, but was a collection of aphorisms from the works of Aristotle, Algazel, Alfarabio, and others. St. Thomas thought that parts of it were taken from the *Elevatio Theologica* of Proclus (Perez).

[2] "If in perfection tempered were the wax,
And were the heaven in its supremest virtue,
The brilliance of the seal would all appear."
(*Par.*, 13. 73.)

[3] Or by arguments addressed to the reason, rather than the convictions of faith (see first paragraph of this chapter).

prepared to receive His bounty, He bestows it in as great a measure as the latter is capable of receiving it. And because these gifts come from the ineffable Love, and Divine Love is appropriated to [the same as] the Holy Spirit, therefore these are called the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which, according to the classification of the Prophet Isaiah,[1] are seven, namely, wisdom, intellect, counsel, strength, knowledge, mercy, and fear of God. O excellent grain! O good and admirable seed! and O admirable and gracious Sower, that waitest only for Thy human creature[2] to prepare the ground for Thee wherein to sow! O blessed are they who cultivate such seed as they ought!

7. Here we must know that the first noble shoot which germinates from this seed, that it may bear fruit, is the appetite of the mind, which in Greek is called *hormen;* and if this be not well cultivated and kept upright by good habits,[3] the seed is worth little, and had better never have been sown.

8. And therefore St. Augustine holds (and also

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[1] Isa. xi. 2, "The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord." (For *mercy*, see third and fourth verses.)

Scartazzini says we should rather say the *sevenfold gift* of the Holy Spirit, and quotes St. Thomas Aquinas, who says that he who has charity has all the gifts of the Holy Spirit in one.

[2] The Vulgate reads "human *nature*," which Giuliani corrects to "human *creature*," as more in accordance with the previous paragraph.

[3] "Such had this man become in his new life,
Potentially, that every righteous habit
Would have made admirable proof in him.
But so much more malignant and more savage
Becomes the land untilled or with bad seed,
The more good earthly vigour it possesses."
(*Purg.*, 30. 115.

Aristotle, in the second of the *Ethics*[1]) that man should accustom himself to do good, and to control his passions, in order that the aforesaid shoot may be hardened by good habit and strengthened in its uprightness, so that it may bear fruit, and from its fruit may issue the sweetness of human happiness.

APPENDIX.

FROM PEREZ, "LA BEATRICE SVELATA," p. 126, *et seq.*

THE question of Universals, transmitted by Porphyrius and Boëthius to the Middle Ages, from which scholastic philosophy took all its motives and nearly all their developments, should have made, and indeed *did* make, the science of the soul and its faculties a thing of supremest interest.

The great struggle between the *Realists* and the *Nominalists*, a struggle which, with its various phases, constituted the whole doctrinal and historical foundation of scholasticism, turned upon this double question: Are ideas, or universal forms, mere conceptions of the mind, and nothing more? or do they correspond to actual, objective substances? In other words, besides particular, individual, concrete entities, do there exist in nature universal entities, corresponding to the general and abstract ideas conceived by the mind?

There were two opposite solutions, which, setting aside minor diversities, were obtained to the problem in the Middle Ages. On one side, *Realism*, more in accordance with Christian symbolism, and therefore more prevalent, asserted that there were as many real, objective, substances as there were ideas of the mind. On the other side, *Nominalism*, with the well-known axiom that there should be no useless multiplication of entities, maintained that nothing existed in nature in the way of *universals* but the name; that only the individual, the concrete, had an intrinsic reality; that the universal, the abstract, was nothing but a mental conception, formed, not from the intuition

[1] Book ii. ch. i.

of a corresponding extrinsic reality, but by abstracting from many individuals their similar and common qualities.

A third school, which might be called eclectic, and is that of Albertus Magnus and of St. Thomas [Aquinas], uniting the two theories, conceded to the *Realists*, in the interests of the Christian beliefs, the existence of universal entities, but limited it to the angels, to the motive Intelligences of the heavens, constituting the super-physical world; and leagued themselves on the other hand with the *Nominalists*, by denying the absolute and perfect correspondence of all the ontological order to the logical, the necessary and universal equation between the ideas of the mind and real existences.

Now, all three of these schools, in order to define the part assigned to the mind in the *intuition* or *formation* of these universals, were each obliged to form an ideological system, which should explain the facts of human consciousness, from the lowest material sensation to the most elevated and abstract ideal conception.

Aristotle's treatise *Of the Soul*, variously interpreted, amplified, or perverted, was usually taken as the basis of all these systems. *Realists*, *Nominalists*, *Eclectics*, although more or less discordant, especially about universals, all agreed in this—that the facts of human knowledge were to be classified under two distinct and principal heads; those which came to the soul by the means or with the help of the bodily organs, and those which she acquired of herself. On the one side, the bodily sensation and all its successive transformations; on the other, the idea, separated from every material or corporeal quality, *intuitive* for the Realists, *formed* for the Nominalists without the aid of the organs, by the mind.

Completely ignoring the principle that no sensation and no idea is the *representation* of an external entity, but rather the result of two factors put in relation to each other, on one side the mind, and the objects or anterior ideas on the other, or, as we say to-day, the *ego* and the *non-ego;* applying to the faculties of the senses and the reason, and to all sensations and ideas, the vulgar metaphor of the *mirror* and the images therein reflected, without, however, suspecting the immense influence of words upon mental facts, they arrived at the following

classification of the whole system of human knowledge and understanding :—

The senses, external and passive organs, receive the *impression* of objects, and the *imprint* or *image* of these is transmitted to an internal sense that they called *common*, by virtue of which, from the *impression* is formed and completed the *sensation.*

The imagination, a faculty which also inherent in the bodily organism, received in itself the image of the lost or absent object that the *common sense* had formed through the impulse of the senses, and from that the *imagined form.*

After the *imaginative*, they put the *estimative* or *cogitative* faculty, which estimates the qualities of objects, compares them, and by judging them forms the conception (*intentio*) of them which it impresses upon the *memory.*

But, after that, they had to explain how the human soul obtained those *forms* or *intuitions* which they called simple ideas, pure universals, deprived of every material adjunct, answering to the intimate reality of nature, or, as they said, to the *quiddity* of things (*Par.*, 20. 92 ; 24. 66). And it was to this supposed faculty alone that they gave the name of *intelligence* (as it were from *intra-leggere*), denying it to that which forms conceptions by experience, which they called simply *reason.*

Perez goes on to say that from the Aristotelian axiom, that *only like can know like* (*De Anima*, i. 2), came the consequence that the *universal* and the *abstract* could not be conceived by a mind wherein there was not a universal principle, separated from any mixture of matter, and capable of soaring to pure conceptions (*intelligibili*) independent of sensations and of notions derived from experience.

This principle, conceived as the recipient or mirror, as it were, of universal ideas, was said to be necessarily devoid of attributes, of every special mode of being, without which these simple ideas could not remain such, but would take on some characteristic of these modes. "What, then, will be the nature," asked Aristotle of himself, "of this power or capability of understanding the universals? No other," he answers, "than the mere *possibility* of understanding, the *possibility* of becoming all ideas in thinking them : *et sic nullam habet naturam nisi istam, scilicet quod est* POSSIBILIS."

This phrase was something far greater than a definition; it created a whole system. The POSSIBLE INTELLECT was henceforth the inexhaustible theme of the schools. . . . Persisting in his favourite metaphor of the mind as a *mirror*, and ideas as *reflections* therein, Aristotle was the first to recognize that, this faculty bearing the same relation to pure conceptions or universals that the sense of sight does to visible things, it was necessary to admit also the existence of an active principle which should stand to this as light to the sense of vision, a principle by which this power should pass from the state of virtuality, of simple disposition for the reception of ideal forms, into act. And this principle, he said, is the ACTIVE INTELLIGENCE. What *form* is, in relation to *matter*, or the pictorial art to the naked canvas, such, he said, is the *active intelligence* in relation to the *possible intellect*. In the union of the two is consummated the act of pure comprehension. As colours cannot affect the sense of sight unless the light causes them to pass from the state of mere *disposition* into *action*, so conceptions (*intelligibili*), virtually only existing in the *possible intellect*, are not produced in it *actually* without the aid of the *active intelligence*.

"This intelligence, universal, *unique*, illuminator of human minds, is separate, intrinsic, immortal, perpetual" (*De Anima*, iii. 3, to 19, 20). "The intellectual life through her is the greatest beatitude to which man can aspire; indeed, it makes him more than man—divine" (*Met.*, xii. 3; *Eth.*, x. 7). (Perez quotes from the Latin version of Aristotle commentated by Averrhoës, as being the one used by Dante.)

It will be readily seen how much this idea resembles the doctrine of the mystics, that the first manifestation of God was the INVISIBLE INTELLECTUAL LIGHT, from which sprang simultaneously the sensible light of heaven, principle of every created thing, and the universal and unique intelligence, the enlightener of all minds.

"The first thing in nature was the LIGHT, by which all things are known: and this we may indeed call WISDOM. . . . Which was plainly expressed by Solomon, when he said that Wisdom was created before heaven and earth" (Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.*, viii. 3).

CHAPTER XXII.

1. IT is a precept of the moral philosophers who have spoken of gifts, that man ought to put intelligence and care into the distribution of his gifts that they may be the more useful to the receiver.[1] Wherefore I, wishing to be obedient to such authority, mean to make this my *Banquet* as useful as I possibly can in all its parts. And because in this part it happens that I am able to discourse somewhat on the sweetness of human happiness, I think that there could not be a more useful theme to those who are not acquainted with it; because, as the Philosopher says in the first of the *Ethics*,[2] and Tullius in his *De Finibus*, he aims badly who does not see the mark [he shoots at]; and thus it would be hard for one to seek this sweetness who was not first aware of it. Wherefore, seeing that this is our ultimate repose, for which we live and perform that which we do, most useful and most necessary is it to see this mark, in order that we may direct towards it the bow of our actions;[3] and especially to cry out to those who, without seeing it, point towards it.[4]

[1] See *Conv.*, i. 8.

[2] *Ethics*, i. 2, "Like archers, shall we not be more likely to attain that which is right if we have a mark?"

[3] "Which aims its arrows at a joyous mark."
(*Par.*, i. 126.)

[4] Witte reads, "and especially to hold good those who point it out to them who see it not." And Giuliani gives it, "and especially for those to look at who do not read the *Ethics!*" It seems to me that the reading of the texts in general, which I have given, is nearer the meaning of the context, Dante having just said that he aims badly who does not see the mark; therefore such men are in special need of warning.

2. Setting aside, then, the opinion that Epicurus the philosopher held on this subject,[1] and also that of Zeno, I intend to come directly to the true opinion of Aristotle and the other Peripatetics. As has been said above, from the Divine goodness infused and sown within us in the beginning of our generation, springs a shoot which the Greeks call *hormen*, that is, the natural appetite of the soul.[2] And as grain when it first sprouts looks almost like grass, and then by process of time becomes dissimilar, so this natural appetite which springs from Divine grace, in the beginning shows itself hardly different from that which comes from nature solely, but with it—as with the foliage of different grains—has much likeness. And not only in grain, but in men and the lower animals, does this resemblance appear; for every animal, whether born rational or bestial, loves itself, and fears and flies from those things which are contrary to its nature, and, hating them, goes on as we have said.[3] And there begins a difference among them with the progress of this appetite, because one takes one road, and the other another. As the apostle says, "Many run for the prize, but one alone

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[1] As to the true end of life (see *Conv.*, iv. 6).

[2] Giuliani thinks that all through this paragraph we should read "rational" instead of "natural." But it seems to me that Dante refers here simply to the desire in general of

> "The simple soul
> That gladly turns to that which gives it pleasure."
> (*Purg.*, 16. 90.)

[3] "Nor only the created things that are
Without intelligence, this bow shoots forth,
But those that have both intellect and love."
(*Par.*, 1. 118.)

obtains it;"[1] so these human appetites take different roads from the beginning, but one road alone is there which leads us to our peace.[2] And therefore, setting aside all the rest, we have to follow, in our book, the course of him who begins well.

3. I say, then, that from the beginning man loves himself, although indistinctly. Then he comes to distinguish those things which are more or less agreeable or hateful to him; and follows or flies from them, as his consciousness distinguishes not only between the other things which he loves in a lesser degree, but also between the things he loves best; and, recognizing in himself divers parts, loves most those which are most noble. And because the soul is a more noble part of man than the body, he loves it more; and thus primarily loving himself and through himself other things, and loving most the best part of himself, it is evident that he loves the soul more than the body or any other thing; which soul he naturally should love more than anything else. Therefore, if the mind always takes delight in the use of the thing beloved, which is the fruit of love, then of this, the most beloved of all things, is the use especially delightful. The use of our soul is especially delightful to us, and that which is especially delightful to us is our felicity and beatitude, which no delight can exceed, nor even appear to exceed, as can be

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 24, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?"

[2] "That peace
Which I believe is waiting for you all."
(*Purg.*, 3. 74.)

"This way goes he who goeth after peace."
(*Purg.*, 24. 141.)

seen by whoso will pay attention to the preceding argument.

4. And no one should say that every appetite is of the soul, because here is meant by the soul only that which belongs to the rational part, that is, the will and the intellect;[1] so that if one should say the *sensitive* appetite was of the soul, there is no place here for such an objection, nor can there be; for no one doubts that the rational appetite is more noble than the sensual, and therefore more to be loved; and so is this of which we now speak.

5. Nevertheless the use of the mind is double, that is, practical and speculative (practical is equivalent to active), and both are most delightful; although that of contemplation is the most so, as we have said before. Its practical use is to act through us virtuously, that is, righteously, by temperance, fortitude, and justice; the speculative is not to operate actively in us, but to consider the works of God and of nature; and the one and the other use make up our beatitude and supreme happiness, as we may see; which is the sweetness of the before-named seed, as now clearly appears. To such sweetness this seed often fails to arrive, for want of proper cultivation, and through its shoots being turned aside. In the same way it may be, through much correction and culture, that where this seed did not fall in the beginning, it may be induced to grow, so that it may come to this fruition.[2]

[1] "And I mean by *intellect* that noble part of our soul commonly called *mind*" (*Conv.*, iv. 15). "*Mind* is that ultimate and most precious part of the soul which is divinity" (ibid., iii. 2).

[2] A very involved and confused passage, in which I have followed as closely as possible the reading of Fraticelli, as being nearest to the original texts.

And there is a way to engraft, as it were, other natures upon different roots. And therefore there is no excuse for any, for if man do not bear this seed on his own stock, he can easily obtain it by grafting. So, in fact, there should be as many who are grafted as there are of those who have allowed a good stock to run wild.

6. Nevertheless, of these uses, one is more full of beatitude than the other; such is the *speculative*, which, without any admixture whatever, is the use of our noblest part, which by our radical love,[1] as has been said, is most to be loved, being the intellect. And this part in this life cannot have its perfect use (which is to behold God, who is the Supreme Intelligible[2]), except in so far as the intellect considers Him, and beholds Him in His effects.[3]

7. And that we demand this beatitude as the supreme one, and not the other (that is, that of the active life[4]), the Gospel of Mark teaches us, if we

[1] The natural love of man for his noblest part, the soul.

[2] "From this it may be seen how blessedness
Is founded in the faculty which *sees*."
(*Par.*, 28. 109.)

[3] "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (Rom. i. 20). "The will of God of itself is not visible; but the invisible things of God are understood and seen by the things that He has made" (*De Mon.*, ii. 2; see also *Conv.*, iii. 8; iv. 10, 16).

[4] Here we have, perhaps, the key to the two Beatrices of Dante's youth and manhood, in the active life and the contemplative life, as described also in *Conv.*, ii. 5, and in the *Ep. to Can Grande*, 33, and in the *De Mon.*, iii. 15, where Dante speaks of the beatitude of this life, which consists in virtuous living, and is figured by the terrestrial paradise; and the beatitude of the life eternal, which consists in the fruition of the Divine aspect, and is figured by the celestial paradise, to which we cannot rise without the aid of the Divine Light. For we attain the first by the education of our reason and the cultivation of the moral and intellectual virtues, but the second through the teachings of the Holy Spirit, which transcend human reason, and impart to us supernatural truths.

noté it carefully. Mark says [ch. xvi.] that Mary Magdalen, and Mary James,[1] and Mary Salome went to look for the Saviour in the sepulchre, and did not find Him, but found a youth clothed in white, who said to them, "You ask for the Saviour, and I tell you He is not here; be not therefore affrighted, but go your way, and tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee; and there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you." By these three women may be understood the three sects of the active life, that is, the Epicureans, the Stoics, and the Peripatetics,[2] who go to the sepulchre (that is, to the present world, which is a receptacle of corruptible things), and demand the Saviour, that is, our Beatitude,[3] and do not find Him; but find a youth clothed in white garments, who, according to the testimony of Matthew and the others,[4] was the angel of God. And therefore Matthew says, "The angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled

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[1] "Mary, the mother of James and Salome" (Mark xvi. 1).

[2] See *Conv.*, iii. 14, last par.; and iv. 6.

[3] *Wisdom* is identified with Christ in book iii. ch. 14, par. 5, and ch. 15, par. 7; and Wisdom and "the beatitude of the intellect" are also spoken of as identical (see ch. 13 of book iii.). In the *Vita Nuova*, § 24, the lady who precedes Beatrice is called *Joan*, "because her name is taken from that John who went before the True Light, saying, I am a voice crying in the desert, Make ready the way of the Lord." Also in § 30 Beatrice is called "a miracle whose only root is the blessed Trinity." And in the *Commedia* she is often identified with Christ, in the language applied to her. (See *Purg.*, 30. 19, and 31. 107, 116, where the *Ottimo* says "the emeralds" mean Christ, the emeralds being the eyes of Beatrice.) In the hundred and thirty-ninth line she is called "the splendour of the living Light Eternal." In *Par.*, iv. 118, she is apostrophized as "O love of the first lover, O divine!" In the same canto, l. 116, she is "the fountain of all truth," as in *Purg.*, 33. 115, she is "the light and glory of the human race." (See *Barlow*, p. 361.)

[4] Matt. xxviii. 2; Luke xxiv. 5, 23; John xx. 12.

back the stone and sat upon it, and his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow."

8. This *angel* is our nobility that comes from God, as has been said, speaking through our reason, and saying to each of these sects, that is, to all who go seeking for their Beatitude in the active life, that it is not there; but [says], "Go ye and tell Peter and the disciples," that is, those who are seeking it, and those who have turned away from it (like Peter who had denied Him), "that He goeth before you into Galilee;" that is, that their Beatitude goes before them into Galilee, or *Contemplation.* Galilee signifies *whiteness*, and white is a colour more full of material light than any other;[1] and thus contemplation is more full of spiritual light than anything here below.

9. And he [the angel] says, "He will go before," not "He will be with you," to give us to understand that in our contemplation God is always in advance of us; nor can we ever attain to Him here, who is our supreme Beatitude.[2] And he [the angel] says, "And there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you;" that is, there shall you partake of His sweetness (that is, of happiness), as has been promised you here; that is, as it is established that you may receive it.

10. And thus it appears that our Beatitude, that is, this happiness of which we are speaking, we may first find *imperfectly* in the active life (that is, in the exercise of the moral virtues), and then almost

[1] "Perhaps this explains," says Giuliani, "the great value given to the verb *imbiancare* (to whiten) in the *Commedia*" (see *Inf.*, 2. 128; *Par.*, 7. 81, etc.).

[2] Here "the supreme Beatitude is identified with God" (see *De Mon.* iii. 15, "To the fruition of the Divine aspect our proper virtue cannot rise, unless aided by the Divine light").

perfectly [in the contemplative life, that is[1]] in the exercise of the intellectual virtues. Which two operations are unimpeded and most direct ways to lead us to the supreme Beatitude, that cannot be obtained here, as appears by what has been said."[2]

CHAPTER XXIII.

1. As the definition of Nobility has been sufficiently demonstrated, and, as far as possible, explained in all its branches, so that we may now see what is the *noble* man, it seems that we should now proceed to that part of the text which begins, "*The soul that this high virtue doth adorn;*" wherein are set forth the signs by which we may recognize the noble man, as has been said. And this part is divided in two: in the first division it is affirmed that this nobility manifestly shines and glows through all the life of the noble man; in the second, its splendours are set forth specifically; and this second part begins, "*Obedient, gracious, full of noble shame.*"

2. In regard to the first part, we must know that this Divine seed, of which we have spoken above, germinates immediately in our soul, putting forth shoots through every power of the soul, according to the needs of each. It germinates then in the

[1] The words bracketed are inserted by Giuliani to complete the antithesis. Here we have the idea touched upon at the beginning of the chapter more fully developed.

[2] God being always in advance of us. Dante's manner of interpreting the Bible shows us how he would have his own works read, in the anagogical (or mystical) sense to which he refers in the *Ep. to Can Grande.*

vegetative, the sensitive, and the rational, and, branching out through the power of all these, directs them towards their perfection; sustaining itself within them always, up to the point where that part of our soul that never dies, returns to its most glorious and supreme Sower, in heaven.[1] And this is what the first part means, as has been said.

3. Then when it says, "*Obedient, gentle, full of noble shame*," it shows by what apparent signs we may recognize the noble man, which signs are the operation of this Divine goodness.[2] And this part is divided into four, according to the four ages in which it acts, as in Adolescence, Youth, Old Age, and Decrepitude;[3] and the second part begins, "*In years of youth, most temperate and strong;*" the third part begins, "*And in her later age;*" and the fourth begins, "*Then in the fourth and last part of her life.*"

4. And this is the general meaning of this part In regard to which we must know that every effect, inasmuch as it is *effect*, receives the likeness of its cause, as far as it is capable of receiving it.[4] Wherefore, since our life, as we have said, and that of every other living being here below, is caused by Heaven, and Heaven reveals itself to all these effects, not as a complete circle, but as part of one, therefore it is fitting that its movement above them should be [in the likeness of] an arch; keeping, as it were, all lives

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[1] An extremely corrupt passage, where I have tried to gather from the various versions the nearest approach to the sense, with the least possible deviation from the original text.

[2] The Divine seed spoken of above.

[3] Decrepitude begins with the seventieth year (see the following chapter, par. 5).

[4] See *Conv.*, iii. 2, par. 2.

(and I say this of men as well as of other living beings) ascending and descending; so that it befits them to resemble the figure of an arch. Returning then to our own life, with which alone we are at present concerned, I say then that it proceeds in the figure of this arch, ascending and descending.[1]

5. And we must know that the ascent of this arch would be always the same, were it not that the material of our seminal constitution impedes the law of human nature. But because this radical moisture is more or less [in quantity], and of better quality and more enduring in one than in another effect (being the subject and nutriment of heat, which is our life), therefore it happens that the arch of one man's life is of greater or lesser extent than that of another. Although it may be shortened by violent death or accidental infirmity, only that [death] which by the common people is called *natural* is its limit, of which the Psalmist says, "Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over."[2]

6. And because the master of our life, Aristotle,[3] recognized this arch of which we speak, he appears to consider our life as an ascent and a descent; wherefore he says, in the place where he treats of youth and old age, that youth is no other than an increase of life. Where the highest point of this arch is, it were difficult to say, on account of the inequalities[4] before mentioned; but in most men, I believe, it is between the thirtieth and fortieth year. And I

[1] "The arc already of my years descending." (*Purg.*, 13. 114.)

[2] Ps. civ. 9.

[3] "The master and leader of the human race" (*Conv.*, iv. 16).

[4] The congenital peculiarities of constitution.

believe that in perfect natures it would be in the thirty-fifth year.[1] And this reason affects me, that our Saviour Christ, whose nature was perfect, chose to die in the thirty-fourth year of His age,[2] because it did not befit Divinity to decline. Nor can we believe that He would not have wished to remain in this our life up to its culmination, since He had been through the low estate of infancy. And the hour of His death makes this evident to us, for He wished this to correspond with His life; wherefore Luke says[3] that it was about the sixth hour when He died; that is to say, the culmination of the day. Whence we may understand that Christ was almost in His thirty-fifth year, that is, at the culmination of His life.

7. Nevertheless this arch is not divided by its central point in our books,[4] but according to the four combinations of contrary qualities that exist in our composition,[5] to each of which a part of our life appears to be appropriated, it being divided into four parts, and called the four ages. The first is called *Ado-*

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[1] "Midway upon the journey of our life."
(*Inf.*, i. 1.)
The date of Dante's birth being 1265, and the date of his vision 1300, he was thirty-five at the time assigned. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten" (Ps. xc. 10). And in *Inf.*, 15. 50, he says—
"I lost me in a valley,
Before my perfect age was quite completed."
That is, before his thirty-fifth year.

[2] "The perfect man, the measure of the fulness of the years of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13).

[3] Luke xxiii. 44.

[4] Dante means that, after all, the central point of this arch is not the proper dividing line of the ages, but that their distinction depends upon the different combinations of the elements belonging to each epoch.

[5] "The air, the fire,
The water, and the earth, and all their mixtures."
(*Par.*, 7. 125.)

lescence, to which belong heat and moisture; the second is *Youth*, to which belong heat and dryness; the third is *Old Age*, to which belong cold and dryness; the fourth is *Decrepitude*, to which belong cold and moisture; as Albertus [Magnus] has written in the fourth *Of Meteors*.[1]

8. And these divisions are made in like manner in the year, which is divided into spring, summer, autumn, and winter. And so it is with the day, up to the third hour, and then to the ninth, leaving the sixth as the centre of these parts, for reasons easily seen, and then proceeding to the vesper hour,[2] and from that on. And therefore the Gentiles said that the chariot of the sun had four horses; the first they called *Eoüs*, the second *Pyroeis*, the third *Æthon*, the fourth *Phlegon*, as Ovid has written in the second of the *Metamorphoses*,[3] treating of the divisions of the day. And it must briefly be made known that (as we have said before, in the sixth chapter of the third book) the Church uses the temporal hours in the division of the day, which consists of twelve hours, short or long, according to the amount of sun.[4] And because the sixth hour, that is, noon, is the most noble of the whole day, and has the most virtue, the Church approaches her offices as near to it as she can from either side, that is, both *before* and *after*.

[1] The original has *Metaura*, which is probably, as Giuliani suggests, a mistake for *Meteors*, upon which Albertus Magnus wrote four books. *Metauro* is the name of a river near Fano.

[2] Three hours before sunset, the sixth hour being noon.

[3] "In the mean time the swift Pyroeis, and Eoüs, and Æthon, the horses of the sun, and Phlegon, the fourth, fill the air with neighings, sending forth flames, and beating the barriers with their feet" (Ovid, *Met.*, ii. 153).

[4] That is, according to the time the sun remains above the horizon.

Therefore the office of the first part of the day, that is, the third hour, is said toward the close of that hour, and those of the third and fourth parts toward their beginning. And therefore we say *half-third*[1] [*mezza-terza*] before it rings for this division, and *half-nine* after it has rung, and so with *half-vespers.* And therefore let all men know that the true *ninth*[2] should always ring at the beginning of the seventh hour of the day; and let this suffice for the present digression.[3]

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[1] "Already had the sun come to *half-third.*"
(*Inf.*, 34. 96.)
That is, it was about 7.30 a.m.

[2] "The waves of Ganges with the *ninth* were burning."
(*Purg.*, 27. 4.)

"As a horologe that calleth us
What time the Bride of God is rising up
With matins to her Spouse that He may love her."
(*Par.*, 10. 139.)

The confusion in this dissertation of Dante's, says Giuliani, arises from the fact that the four parts of the day, which are first, third, sixth, and ninth, each being formed of three temporal (or secular) hours, are not sufficiently distinguished from the four *canonical* hours of the Church offices, that is, third, sixth, ninth, and vespers, beginning before daylight and finishing with it. Dante wishes to say that not only are the year and the day divided into four parts, but that the Church also divides her offices thus. Barlow gives them in a table.

	Mattutino (Matins)	Before Sunrise.
About a.m.		Sunrise.
6.	The First	The three hours after Sunrise.
9.	The Third, The Sixth	The three hours before Noon.
p.m.		Midday.
2.	The Ninth	The three hours after Noon.
3.	Vespers	
6.	Complines	The three hours before Sunset.
		Sunset.
	Ave Maria	Half an hour after Sunset.

Of course these hours depend on the time of year.

Chapter XXIV.

1. Returning to our proposition, I say that human life is divided into four ages. The first is called *Adolescence*, that is, increase of life; the second is called *Youth*, that is, the age that can help to, or give, perfection; and thus it is understood to be the perfect age, because no one can give except of what he has; the third is called *Old Age;* the fourth *Decrepitude*, as we have said before.

2. About the first there is no doubt, but all wise men agree that it lasts till the twenty-fifth year;[1] and because up to this time our soul is concerned with the growth and improvement of the body (whence many and great transformations take place in our person), the rational part of us has not yet come to perfect discretion. Wherefore the law decides that before this period [*i.e.* of perfect discretion] man cannot do certain things without a guardian of the perfect age.

3. To the second, which is, indeed, the climax of our life, different periods of time are assigned by many. But setting aside what philosophers and physicians have written about it, and returning to the true argument, I say that with the majority (by which one can and ought to form all natural judgments[2]) this age lasts twenty years. And the reason that con-

[1] "The threshold of my second age."
(*Purg.*, 30. 124.)

[2] That is, our judgment, where facts of nature are concerned, must be governed by the majority of cases in point.

vinces me of this is, that if the summit of our arch is in the thirty-fifth year,[1] this age should take as much time for its descent as it has had for its ascent; and this ascent and descent comprise nearly all the central part of the arch, wherein little flexion is seen. Thus we see that Youth is completed in the forty-fifth year.

4. And as Adolescence lasts till the twenty-fifth year, and the ascent goes on up to Youth; so the descent, that is, Old Age, is the same amount of time coming after Youth; and, therefore, Old Age ends in the seventieth year.

5. But because Adolescence does not begin with the beginning of life, taking it in the way here described, but about ten years afterwards,[2] and because our life hurries in its ascent, but holds back in its descent, and because the natural heat is diminished and has little power, and the moisture is increased, not in quantity but in quality, so that it is less easily evaporated and consumed, therefore it happens that beyond Old Age about ten years remain to us of life, perhaps a little more or less. And this period is called Decrepitude. Therefore we see that Plato (who may be said to have had the best of natures, both as to its perfection and as to his

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[1] See note to par. 6 of preceding chapter.

[2] The Vulgate reads *eight months*, generally corrected to *eight years*; but, as Giuliani justly observes, if we follow Dante's own rule of making the divisions of the arch equal, and there remain "about ten years more or less" after Old Age, there should be "about *ten* years more or less" before the beginning of Adolescence. In the *Vita Nuova*, § 2, he says he was *nine* when he first saw Beatrice, and in *Purg.*, 30. 42, he says he had felt her power "ere from my *infancy* I had come forth." Longfellow translates *puerizia* as "boyhood," but the *Vocabolario Dantesco* admits only the signification of "infancy."

[beauty of] face, which made Socrates love him at first sight) lived for eighty-one years,[1] according to the testimony of Tullius in his *De Senectute.* And I believe that if Christ had not been crucified, and had lived out the term of His life as allotted by nature, that He would have been translated in His eighty-first year from a mortal to an eternal body.[2]

6. Nevertheless, as has been said before, these periods may be longer or shorter according to our nature and composition;[3] but as they are, it seems to me that they may be observed in the aforesaid proportion in all men, that is, if we make these ages longer or shorter according to the entire time of the natural life. Through all these ages, this Nobility of which we speak shows its effects in different ways in the ennobled soul; and this is what the present part

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[1] Eighty-one years, being nine times nine, is called "the perfect age" by all the mystics. In the *Vita Nuova*, § 30, Dante says that Beatrice died when "the perfect number" had been nine times completed, in the thirteenth century, which has led some to think that the date of her death should be 1281 instead of 1290, the question as to whether we should take 10 or 9 for "the perfect number" being always an open one. It is a curious coincidence that Petrarch, speaking of the death of Laura on the anniversary of her birth, says, "Plato died when his eighty-first year was accomplished, a surprising thing, on the anniversary of his birth;" and he adds, "Magi, qui tunc forte Athenes erant, immolaverunt defuncto, amplioris fuisse sortis quam humanæ rati, quia consummasset *perfectissimum numerum*, quem novem novies multiplicata componunt" (*Opera*, p. 402, ed. Basle, 1581). And Seneca says, "Consummare *perfectum numerum* quem novem novies multiplicata componunt" (*Epist.*, 58).

[2] "With the two garments in the blessed cloister
Are the two lights alone that have ascended."
(*Par.*, 25. 127.)

It was a tradition of the Church that the Virgin Mary ascended *bodily* to heaven, and that in her tomb were found only—some say roses, some manna. Some of the Gnostic sects carried their docetism so far as to declare that the Virgin, like Christ, had only a spiritual body.

[3] See previous chapter, par. 5.

(on which we are now writing) is intended to show. Here we must know that our good and righteous nature acts rationally in us, as we see the nature of the plants act in them; and therefore different customs and different manners befit different ages, during which the ennobled soul proceeds in due order along a single way, fitting her actions to their times and seasons[1] in such manner that they may finally bring forth that fruit for which they were ordained. And Tullius agrees with this in his book *De Senectute.*

7. And setting aside the figurative method by which Virgil describes the progression of these different ages in the *Æneid*,[2] and setting aside what Egidius the Hermit[3] says of them in the first part of his *Government of Princes*, and setting aside the allusions to them made by Tullius in his *Offices*, and following only that which reason may see of itself, I say that this first age is the gate and the way by which we enter upon our good life. At this entrance certain things are absolutely necessary to us, which bountiful Nature, who never fails to provide all necessary things,[4] gives to us; as we see that she gives to

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[1] See *Conv.*, i. 1, par. 7.

[2] This refers to the allegory of the different ages of life which Dante discovers in the *Æneid* (see *Conv.*, iv. 26), and not to any special description.

[3] "Sylvester and Egidius barefoot go
After the bridegroom, so doth please the bride!"
(*Par.*, xi. 83.)
Egidius (or Giles) was the third follower of St. Francis, the spouse of Poverty. He was the author of a book called *Verba Aurea*, or "Golden Words," and was distinguished for his sweet and saintly life.

[4] "'Tis impossible
That Nature tire in doing what is needful."
(*Par.*, 8. 114.)
"Nature fails in none of her operation, being the work of the Divine

the vine the leaves needed to shelter the fruit, and the tendrils[1] with which it aids and supports its weakness, so that it may be able to sustain the weight of its fruit.

8. Beneficent Nature, then, gives to this age four things necessary to enable it to enter the City of the Good Life. The first is *obedience;* the second, *graciousness;* the third, *shame;* the fourth, *physical beauty*,[2] as the text says in the first division. And therefore we must observe that as they who have never been in a city could not find their way there without the guidance of some one who was used to it, so the adolescent who enters the wood of error of this life[3] could not keep the right road were he not shown it by his elders. Nor would the showing suffice if he were not obedient to their commands; and therefore at this age obedience is necessary. Well might some one say, "Shall he, then, be called obedient who shall believe in evil commands, as well as he who shall believe in good ones?" I answer that this would not be obedience, but transgression. For if the king should command one way and the servant another, the servant is not to be obeyed, because that would be to disobey the king; and thus it would be trangression. And therefore Solomon says, when he

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intelligence" (*De Mon.*, ii. 7). "God and Nature always do, and will, that which is best" (*Aq. et Terr.*, § 13).

[1] "The vine, indeed, which by nature is prone to fall, and is borne down to the ground unless it be propped, in order to raise itself up, embraces with its tendrils, as it were with hands, whatever it meets with" (Cicero, *De Senect.*, 15).

[2] Which comprises physical development (see ver. 7 of canzone iii.)

[3] "I found myself within a forest dark,
Wherein the road direct could not be found."
(*Inf.*, i. 2.)

means to correct his son (and this is his first commandment), "My son, hear the instruction of thy father."[1] And then he removes him immediately from the wicked counsel and teaching of others, saying, "Nor let sinners entice thee with pleasure and flatteries to go with them."[2] Wherefore, seeing that as soon as he is born the child takes to the breast of his mother, so, as soon as any ray of intelligence appears in him, should he turn to the correction of his father, and his father to instruct him. And let the father take heed that he set no example in his actions contrary to the words of his admonitions, for naturally we see all children look more closely to the paternal footprints than any others. And therefore the law, which provides for this, says and commands that the person of the father should ever appear holy and virtuous to his children; and thus we see that obedience is necessary at this age. And therefore Solomon writes in his Proverbs that they who humbly and obediently suffer the righteous reproofs of their corrector shall be glorious;[3] and he says "shall be," to give us to understand that he speaks to the adolescent, because he cannot be so at his present age. And should any one object that this is said of the father and not of others, I say that all obedience should be subject to that paid to the father. Where-

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[1] Prov. i. 8.

[2] Prov. i. 10, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." The Latin version reads, "*Fili mi, si te* lactaverint *peccatores, ne acquiescas eis.*" Dante takes up the same metaphor in the next sentence.

[3] Prov. xv. 31, "The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise"—"*Auris quæ audit increpationes vitæ, in medio Sapientum commorabitur.*"

fore the Apostle says to the Colossians,[1] "Children, obey your fathers in all things; for such is the will of God." And if the father be not living, then he must be obeyed who, by the last will of the father, has been put in his place; and if the father die intestate, the child is to obey him to whom the law commits his government. And then those masters and elders should be obeyed to whom in any way he seems to be committed, either by the father or by him who stands in the father's place.

9. But because this has been a very long chapter, on account of the useful digressions it contains, we will speak of the other things [necessary to youth] in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXV.

1. NOT only is the well-conditioned soul obedient in Adolescence, but also *gracious*,[2] which is the other thing necessary at this age to effect a good entrance through the gate of Youth. It is necessary, since we cannot have a perfect life without friends, as Aristotle says in the eighth of the *Ethics*,[3] and [the seeds of] most friendships seem to be sown during this first age, because then man begins to be gracious or the contrary. Such grace is gained by gentle manners, that is, sweet and courteous speech,

[1] Col. iii. 20 (and Eph. vi. 1), "Children, obey your *parents*," etc. It is a curious and significant fact that Dante takes no account of the *mother* except as a nurse.

[2] The word in the original is *soave*, to which "gracious" seems to correspond in this connection better than "sweet" or "suave."

[3] "Without friends no one would choose to live, even if he had all other goods" (*Ethics*, viii. 1).

and sweet and courteous actions and services. And therefore Solomon says to his adolescent son, "Surely the Lord scorneth the scorners, but He giveth grace unto the gentle."[1] And elsewhere he says, "Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse ways put far from thee;"[2] by which it appears that graciousness is also necessary to Adolescence, as we have said.

2. And the passion of *shame* is also necessary to this age; and therefore the good and noble nature shows it at this period, as the text says.[3] And because shame is the most evident sign of Nobility in Adolescence, since it is then especially necessary to that good foundation of our life with which the noble nature is concerned, it befits us diligently to discourse of it.

3. I say that by *shame* I mean three passions necessary to the foundation of the good life: one is *stupefaction;* another is *modesty;* the third is *consciousness*[4] [*verecundia*]; although the common people do not discern this distinction. And all three are necessary at this age for this reason. At this age

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[1] Prov. iii. 34. In the English version "the *lowly.*"

[2] Prov. iv. 24. In the English version "perverse *lips.*"

[3] The sixth and seventh verses of canzone iii. (see also *Conv.*, iv. 19, par. 4). It is said that Diogenes, seeing a youth blush, observed, "He has a good soul; that red is the colour of virtue." "This passion befits not every age, but only that of youth" (Aristotle, *Ethics*, iv. 9).

[4] *Verecundia*, as used by Dante, corresponds more nearly to our word "consciousness" than to any other one word. In Edmonds' translation of Cicero's *Offices*, he translates it "moral susceptibility," and defines it as an inborn reverence for what is right, and an abhorrence of what is wrong, and quotes Plato as saying, "God, being afraid lest the human race should entirely perish upon earth, gave to mankind justice and *moral susceptibility*, those ornaments of states and bonds of society."

it is necessary to be reverent[1] and desirous to learn; at this age it is necessary to be self-controlled, so as not to commit excesses; at this age it is necessary to be penitent for our sins, so that we may not get in the habit of sinning. And all these things go to make up the aforesaid passions, which are vulgarly called *shame.*

4. For *stupefaction*[2] is a bewilderment of the soul at the sight of great and wonderful things (or hearing, or any other perception of them), which, by their grandeur, make those who perceive them reverent; by their wonderfulness, make those who perceive them desirous to know them.[3] And therefore the kings of old had magnificent works of gold and [precious] stones, and of art, in their palaces, in order that those who saw them might be stupefied, and therefore reverent, and might demand conditions honourable to the king. And therefore Statius, the

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[1] See *Conv.*, iv. 8, par. 1.

[2] "As I had come from human to divine,

. . . . . .

Judge with what stupefaction I was filled!"
(*Par.*, 31. 37, 40.)

"And almost stupefied, I then demanded," etc.
(*Par.*, 26. 80.)

"And I
Stood stupefied before the car of light."
(*Purg.*, 4. 59.)

"Nor otherwise confused and stupefied
We see the mountaineer, staring and dumb,
When rough and rustic to the town he goes."
(*Purg.*, 26. 67.)

[3] "Had rendered me desirous to know."
(*Purg.*, 20. 146.)

"The newness of the sound and the great light,
Kindled in me a longing for their cause."
(*Par.*, 1. 82.)

sweet poet,[1] says in the first [book] of his *History of Thebes*, that when Adrastus,[2] the king of the Argives, saw Polynices covered with a lion's skin, and saw Tydeus covered with the skin of a wild boar, and remembered the answer that Apollo had given about his sons, he was stupefied, and therefore more reverent and more desirous to know.

5. *Modesty* is a shrinking of the mind from foul things, together with a fear of falling into them; as we see in maidens and good women, and in adolescents, who are so modest that not only where there are inducements or temptations to sin, but even where there may be merely some imagination of sensual pleasure, it is all depicted upon their faces in pallid or in rosy tints.[3] Whence the above-named poet, in the aforesaid first book of the *History of*

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[1] "Sweet" is not generally considered an appropriate epithet to apply to Statius. Dante speaks of him in *Purg.*, 21. 88, where he says—

> "My vocal spirit was so sweet that Rome,
> Me a Toulousan, drew unto herself."

Giuliani thinks Dante may have been thinking of Juvenal's eulogy of Statius in his seventh Satire, where he speaks of his *dulcet* numbers, etc. Neither was Statius born in Toulouse, but in Naples, although in the time of Dante this was not generally known, Statius the poet, of Naples, being confounded with Statius the rhetorician, of Toulouse. The principal poems of Statius were the *Silvæ* (not discovered in Dante's time); the *Thebaid*, an epic in twelve books; and the *Achilleid*, unfinished.

[2] Adrastus, having been told by the oracle that his daughters should marry a lion and a wild boar, came upon Tydeus and Polynices fighting, and recognized the figures of these animals upon their shields.

[3] "The same colour that through sun adverse,
Painteth the clouds at evening and at morn."
(*Par.*, 27. 28.)

"That lovely rose, that long hath been
The honour of fair ladies, dear to love,
And dear to virtue's self."
(*Parini.*)

Thebes, says that when Acestes, the nurse of Argia and Deiphile,[1] daughters of King Adrastus, led them before the eyes of their virtuous father, and into the presence of the two pilgrims (that is, Polynices and Tydeus), the maidens turned pale and red; and their eyes shunned the glances of others, and they kept them fixed upon the paternal face alone, as if there were safety. Oh, to how many sins has this modesty proved a curb! how many sinful things and demands it has silenced! how many vicious desires restrained! how many evil temptations rendered hopeless, not only in the modest woman herself, but also in those who looked upon her! how many foul words it has held back! because, as Tullius says in the first of the *Offices*, "There is no foul act that it would not be a foul thing to name."[2] And therefore the modest and noble man never speaks so that his words would not be decent in the mouth of any woman. Ah, how ill it suits any man who goes seeking honour, to speak of things that would sound badly from any woman's lips!

6. *Consciousness* is the fear of dishonour through a fault committed.[3] And of this fear is born a penitence for the fault, carrying with it a bitterness

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[1] It was, probably, the remembrance of this passage of Statius that made Dante give Argia and Deiphile such honourable places in the Pagan Limbo (see *Purg.*, 22. 110).

[2] Pederzini thinks Dante must have quoted from memory here, because Cicero's real words are, "That which is not shameful if privately performed, it is still obscene to describe." Giuliani thinks an omission has been made by the copyists, and that the text should read, "There is no act, not foul if done in secret, that it would not be a foul thing to name" (see Cicero's *Offices*, i. 35; and *Purg.*, 25. 43, "*Where*, we had better be silent than to say").

[3] "Shame is a kind of fear of disgrace" (*Ethics*, iv. 9.)

that chastises one into sinning no more.[1] Therefore the same poet [Statius] says in the same place, that when Polynices was questioned concerning his circumstances by Adrastus the king, he hesitated to speak at first, being ashamed of the sin he had committed against his father, and also of the sins of Œdipus his father, which seemed to redound to the shame of the son. And he did not name his father; but his ancestors, and his country, and his mother. [Hence we see plainly that shame is necessary at this age.[2]]

7. And not only does the noble nature display *obedience*, *graciousness*, and *shame* at this age, but also *beauty and agility of body*, as the text implies, where it says, "*And even the body she makes beautiful.*" [And this "makes beautiful" (*adorna*) is a verb and not a noun; a verb, I say, in the indicative present, and the third person.[3]] Here we must observe that this work is also necessary to our good life, because our soul is obliged to perform a great part of its work through the organs of the body; and can work well only when the body in all its parts is well prepared and disposed.[4] And when it is well prepared and

[1] "Less shame doth wash away a greater fault."
(*Inf.*, 30. 142.)

"O noble conscience, and without a stain,
How sharp a sting is trivial fault to thee!"
(*Purg.*, 3. 8.)

"Shame brings forth in us repentance, which is her firstborn" (*Ep. Card. Ital.*, § 9).

[2] Giuliani leaves out the words in brackets, thinking that here it is not a question of *shame*, but of *consciousness*; but wrongly, I think, because the sentence is intended to be a summing-up of the whole subject.

[3] The last half of this sentence is omitted by many editors as an interpolation, which seems to me equally true of the whole of it.

[4] See *Conv.*, i. 5; iii. 15.

disposed, then it is beautiful, as a whole and in all its parts; because the proper ordering of our members produces a pleasure of I know not what wonderful harmony; and its good disposition (which is health) throws over all a colour sweet to look upon. And thus to say that the noble nature beautifies its body, and makes it alert[1] and fair, is no other than to say that it embellishes it to its ordained perfection. And this, with the other things of which we have spoken, seems to be necessary to Adolescence. And these the noble soul, that is, the noble nature, causes, and concerns herself with them from the first, as something implanted by Divine Providence.[2]

CHAPTER XXVI.

1. SINCE we have discussed the first division of this part, which shows how we may recognize the noble man by evident signs, we have now to proceed to the second part, which begins, "*In years of Youth, most temperate and strong.*"

2. It says, then, that as the noble nature shows itself in Adolescence obedient, gentle, modest, and attentive to the beautifying of the body, so in Youth it is *temperate*, *strong*, and *loving*, and *courteous*, and *loyal*. Which five things appear to be, and are, necessary to our perfection, as far as regards our-

[1] Dante uses *accorto* in the sense of "alert" in *Inf.*, 13. 120, and 34. 87—

"Then after turned towards me his steps alert."

[2] This is Giuliani's reading. Fraticelli interprets it, "these, the noble soul, that is, the noble nature, administers to it (Adolescence) from the first," etc.

selves. And concerning this, we should observe that all that the noble nature prepares in the first age, is ordained and made ready by the providence of that universal nature which ordains each particular [nature] for its own perfection.[1]

3. This perfection of ours may be considered in two ways. We may consider it in relation to ourselves, and this we should attain in Youth, which is the culmination of our life.[2] And we may consider it in relation to others. And because it is necessary first to be perfect, and then to communicate that perfection to others, we should acquire this secondary perfection after this period, that is, in Old Age, as we shall relate hereafter.

4. Here, then, we must recall to mind what has been already said in the twenty-second chapter of this book, about that appetite[3] which arises in us from our very beginning. This appetite never does

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[1] "And not alone all natures are foreseen
Within the mind that of itself is perfect,
But they together with their preservation."
(*Par.*, 8. 100.)

Pederzini quotes, as explanatory of this passage of the *Convito*, an extract from Varchi: "Universal nature is no other than an active virtue, or efficient cause in some univeral principle, or in some superior substance, such as the heavens and their souls, that is, the intelligences that move them. . . . Particular nature is no other than an active virtue, or efficient cause, which preserves and protects (as far as it can) that thing, whatever it may be, of which it is the nature. And this [thing] can do nothing save by virtue of that [nature]; so that the *particular*, or inferior *nature*, may be called the instrument, as it were, of the *universal* or superior nature" (*Lessons of Nature*, ch. 12). See last sentence of previous chapter.

[2] See *Conv.*, iv. 23, par. 5.

[3] "Those primal appetites
Which are in you as instinct in the bee
To make its honey."
(*Purg.*, 18. 57.)

anything but [impel us] to pursue or to flee; and when it impels us to pursue that which we should pursue, and as far as is right, and to fly from that which we should fly from, and as far as is right, then man is within the limits of his perfection. For, indeed, this appetite needs to be ridden by reason.[1] Because as a loose horse, however noble its nature, will not behave well of itself without a good rider, so this appetite (which is called wrathful and lustful), however noble it may be,[2] should obey the reason,[3] which guides it with curb and spur like a good rider; using the curb when it *pursues* (and this curb is called temperance, and shows us how far we may pursue); using the spur when it flees, to turn its back to the place it would fly from (and this spur is called fortitude, or magnanimity,[4] which virtue shows us where we should stop [in our flight] and use the spur[5]). And Virgil, our greatest poet,[6] tells us how Æneas was thus restrained, in that part of the *Æneid* which represents this age, including the fourth, fifth, and sixth books.[7] And how he felt the curb, when,

[1] See *Conv.*, iv. 9, par. 3.

[2] Although noble by nature, as being the first shoot from the seed of nobility (see *Conv.*, iv. 21, par. 7), still it needs to be controlled.

[3] "Innate within you is the power that counsels,
And it should keep the threshold of assent."
(*Purg.*, 18. 62.)

("If thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door," Gen. iv. 7.)

[4] Dante always uses "magnanimity" in its original sense of greatness of soul, or heroism (see *Inf.*, 2. 44, and 10. 73, where both Virgil and Farinata are called "the magnanimous".)

[5] This is Giuliani's reading, which seems more consistent with the context than Biscioni's "where we should stop and fight." See *Inf.*, 31. 27—

"Therefore a little faster spur thee on."

[6] "Our greatest muse" (*Par.*, 15. 26).

[7] See *Conv.*, iv. 24, par. 7.

having received from Dido so much pleasure (as will be told afterwards in the seventh treatise[1]), and taking such delight with her, he departed from her, that he might follow the virtuous, praiseworthy, and fruitful way, as is written in the fourth of the *Æneid!* How he was spurred on, when he dared to enter Hades alone with the Sibyl, in search of the soul of his father Anchises, in the face of so many dangers, as we read in the sixth [book] of the aforesaid history![2] This shows how in our Youth it is necessary to our perfection to be *temperate* and *strong*. And this the good [or noble] nature shows itself to be, as the text expressly states.

5. Again, to this age and to its perfection, it is necessary to be *loving;* wherefore it should look both backwards and in advance, as befits a thing which is in the centre of the circle.[3] The youth should love his elders, from whom he has received his being, his nourishment, and his instruction, that he may not appear ungrateful. He should love his juniors, so that out of this love he may give them of his good things, for which afterwards, in the time of less prosperity, he may be by them maintained and

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[1] Here we have a subject indicated for the unwritten seventh book.

[2] Dante calls the poems of both Virgil and Statius *histories*.

[3] Pederzini and Fraticelli read "the centre of the circle," but Giuliani prefers "the meridian circle," wherein the sun reaches his climax.

"The sun had left the circle of meridian."

(*Purg.*, 25. 2.)

In the *Vita Nuova*, § 12, *Love*, who is greeted as "the Lord of nobility," appears to Dante in a vision, and says to him, "I am as the centre of a circle, to which all parts of its circumference bear an equal relation; not so thou." And continues, "Ask no more than may be useful to thee." Seeing that Dante was still an *adolescent* at this time, can these two passages have any connection?

honoured. And this love Æneas felt (as the same poet shows us in the aforesaid fifth book) when he left the aged Trojans in Sicily, recommended to Acestes, and freed them from further toil ;[1] and when he taught in the same place his son Ascanius, training him in arms with the other youths. Whence it appears that *love* is necessary to this age, as the text says.

6. Again, it is necessary at this age to be *courteous*, because, although in every age courteous manners are beautiful, in this they are especially necessary, seeing that Old Age cannot have them, on account of the gravity and severity demanded of it; and still more is it so with Decrepitude.[2] And that Æneas possessed this courtesy, the highest of poets[3] shows us in the sixth book aforesaid, when he says that Æneas the king, to honour the body of the dead Misenus[4] (who had been the trumpeter of Hector, and then had accompanied Æneas), girded himself and took an axe, and helped to cut wood for the fire whereon the dead body was to be burned, according to their custom. Whence it is plainly to be seen that this *courtesy* is necessary to Youth; and therefore the noble soul displays it at that age, as we have said.

7. Again, it is necessary at this age to be *loyal*.

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[1] "And those who weary toil did not endure
Unto the end, with dead Anchises' son."
(*Purg.*, 18. 137.)

[2] That is, a certain deferential courtesy exacted from youth cannot be expected from age.

[3] "All honoured be the highest of our poets."
(*Inf.*, 4. 80.)

[4] Misenus had provoked the sea-gods by the challenges of his trumpet, and they drowned him at Cumæ, where Cape Miseno still bears his name. Dante mentions him also in *De Mon.*, ii. 3.

Loyalty is the following and carrying out of all that the laws enjoin; and this is especially necessary in the youth; for the adolescent, as we have said, deserves ready forgiveness, on account of his being so young; the old man, from his greater experience, should be [spontaneously] upright, and not as a follower of the law, except in so far as his judgment and the law are, as it were, the same thing, and almost without any law should follow the dictates of his upright mind,[1] a thing the young man cannot do. And it is enough if he follow the law and find delight in following it, as the aforesaid poet, in the aforesaid fifth book, says that Æneas did, when he instituted the games in Sicily on the anniversary of his father's death; for that which he promised as the reward of victories he gave loyally to every victor, according to their ancient usage, which had become their law.

8. Whereby it is evident that, at this age, loyalty, courtesy, love, fortitude, and temperance are necessary, as the text says, which I have now expounded; and therefore the noble soul displays them all.

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[1] So Virgil, seeing Dante arrived at the power of guiding himself, says—

"Take thine own pleasure for thy guide henceforth."
(*Purg.*, 27. 131.)

And continues—

"Expect no more or word or sign from me."

And speaking of the wise, in the *Epistle to Can Grande*, par. 2, Dante says, "Being vigorous of intellect and reason, and endowed with a certain divine liberty, no custom can tyrannize over them. Nor is this to be wondered at, seeing that it is not the laws that control them, but they the laws" (see also *Conv.*, iv. 9, par. 3).

Chapter XXVII.

1. Having sufficiently studied and discussed that part of the text wherein is shown the probity that the noble soul imparts to Youth, it seems that we have now to explain the third part, which begins, "*And in her later age;*" wherein the text shows what things the noble nature displays and ought to possess in the third period, which is Old Age. And it says that the noble soul in Old Age is *prudent*, is *just*, is *liberal*, and rejoices to say and to hear all that is for the good of others; that is, it is *affable*. And, indeed, these four virtues are most fitting to this age.

2. And to appreciate this, we must know that, as Tullius has said in his *De Senectute*, "our life[1] has a certain course and way of nature, and that a simple one; and to each part of it is allotted the season for certain things."[2] Wherefore, as to Adolescence is given, as we have already said, that by which it may come to perfection and to maturity, so to Youth is given that perfection and maturity, that the sweetness of its fruit may be profitable to itself and others. Because, as Aristotle says,[3] man is a social animal, being required to be useful not to himself alone, but to others also.[4] Whence we read of Cato, that he

[1] "That life which is a progress towards our death." (*Purg.*, 33. 54.)

[2] The text has "our *good* nature," evidently the interpolation of some copyist, as the passage in Cicero reads, "*Cursus est certus ætatis, et una via naturæ, eaque simplex: suaque cuique parti tempestivitas est data*" (*De Senect.*, 10).

[3] "Man is naturally a social being" (*Ethics*, i. 7).

[4] "To discover the good of an individual is satisfactory, but to discover that of a state or nation is more noble and divine" (*Ethics*, i. 2; quoted also in *De Mon.*, ii. 8).

believed himself to be born not for himself alone, but for his country, and for all the world.[1] Therefore after one's own perfection, which is acquired in Youth, that [other] perfection ought to come which enlightens[2] not only one's self, but others; and should make a man open out, as it were, like a rose,[3] which can no longer keep closed, but must give forth the fragrance generated within it; and this should be in the third age of which we are now speaking.

3. Then it is fitting that this age should be *prudent*,[4] that is, wise; and for this is required a good memory for things known [or the past], a good knowledge of the present, and a wise forecast of the future. And as the Philosopher says in the sixth of the *Ethics*,[5] "it is impossible for him to be wise who is not good;" therefore we are not to call him a *wise* man who proceeds by subterfuge and deceit, but he may be called *astute*. For as no one would call a man wise because he knew how to drive the point of a knife directly into the pupil of the eye, so no one would call him wise who knew how to do any evil thing well, in the

[1] Cato of Utica (see next chapter). "This was the unswerving rule of the rigid Cato; . . . not to believe himself born for himself, but for all the world" (*Phars.*, ii. 383).

[2] "The way of the just is as a shining light" (*Conv.*, iii. 15).

[3] "Dilated
As the sun doth the rose, when it becomes
As far unfolded as it hath the power."
(*Par.*, 22. 55.)

"Even as the flow'rets, by the cold of night
Bowed down and closed, when the sun whitens them,
Uplift themselves all open on their stems."
(*Inf.*, 2. 127).

[4] See note to par. 15 of ch. 17 of this book.

[5] "It is clearly impossible for a person who is not good to be prudent" (*Ethics*, vi. 12).

doing of which he would always injure himself more than others.[1] If we take heed thereto, we shall see that from prudence come good counsels, which lead one's self and others to a good end in human things and actions. And this is the gift that Solomon, seeing himself appointed to govern the people, asked of God, as it is written in the Third Book of Kings.[2] Nor does such a prudent man wait for a man to ask him for counsel; but, looking out for his needs, gives his advice without being asked for it,[3] as the rose gives forth her fragrance not only to him who seeks it, but to all who come near her.

4. Here some doctor or lawyer might say, "Shall I then bring my advice and give it away before it is even asked for, and receive no reward for my skill?" I answer as did our Lord, "Freely ye have received, freely give.[4] I say then, sir lawyer, that those counsels which do not relate to your profession, and which come solely from the good sense that God has given you (which is the *prudence* of which we speak), you ought not to sell to the children of Him who hath

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[1] Because the evil would recoil upon himself, "as a serpent twists, and returns upon itself" (*Ep. Ital. Reg.*, § 6).

[2] 1 Kings iii. 9, "Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad;" and see Wisd. vi. 21.

> "Clearly he was a king who asked for wisdom,
> That he might be sufficiently a king."
> (*Par.*, 13. 95.)

[3] "He who sees the need and waits the asking,
Malignly leans already towards denial."
(*Purg.*, 17, 59.)

"Not only thy benignity gives succour
To him who asketh it, but oftentimes
Forerunneth of its own accord the asking."
(*Par.*, 33. 16.)

[4] Matt. x. 8.

given it to you; but those which do belong to your profession, which you have purchased, you may sell, but not in such a way that you cannot sometimes take a tenth part [of the profit thereof] and give it to God, that is, to those miserable ones to whom Divine favour alone remains.[1]

5. It also befits this age to be *just*, so that its judgments and its authority[2] may be a light and a law unto others.[3] And because this particular virtue, that is, justice, was considered by the philosophers to be seen in perfection at this period, the government of the city was committed to those who had attained this age; and therefore the assembly of rulers was called the *Senate*.[4] O wretched, wretched country of mine! what pity moves me for thee, whenever I read, whenever I write, anything that may pertain to civil government![5] But as justice will be treated of in

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[1] The *poor of God*. See *Par.*, 12. 93, and 22. 83—

"For whatsoever hath the Church in keeping,
Is for the folk that ask it in God's name."

"Those who call themselves zealous in the Christian faith, and have no compassion for Christ's poor" (*De Mon.*, ii. 10).

[2] So the mighty spirits of the Pagan Limbo are described as

"People
Of great *authority* in their countenances."
(*Inf.*, 4. 113.)

[3] *Conv.*, iii. 15, par. 8; iv. 26, par. 7.

[4] "And from the *seniors* rose the *senate's* name."
(Ovid.)

"In all governments, the councils of power were held by the old; and patricians or *patres*, senate or *senes*, seigneurs or *seniors*, *gerousia* the senate of Sparta, the *presbytery* of the Church, and the like, all signify simply old men" (Emerson on *Old Age*; see Cicero, *De Senect.*, ch. 6).

[5] "But we, to whom the whole world is our country, as to fish, the sea, although we drank of the waters of the Arno before our teeth came, and who so love Florence, that for having loved her we suffer unjust exile, nevertheless support the shoulders of our justice with

the last Book but one of this volume,[1] let what little we have said of it here suffice for the present.

6. It also befits this age to be *liberal;* for that thing is fitting which most fully satisfies the requirements of its nature, and the requirements of liberality can never be so well satisfied as at this age. For if we consider carefully the argument of Aristotle in the fourth of the *Ethics*,[2] and that of Tullius in the *Offices*,[3] liberality should be so adapted to time and place, that he who exercises it should injure neither himself nor others, which cannot be without [the aid of] prudence and justice; which virtues cannot, by the natural way, be acquired in perfection before this period.

7. Ah, miscreants, born beneath an evil star! ye who plunder widows and orphans, who rob the weak, who usurp and seize upon the property of others; and with it furnish forth banquets, give away horses and arms, robes and money; wear superb clothing, build magnificent edifices, and believe this is to be liberal! And is this any other than to steal the cloth from the altar, to cover with it both the thief and his table? Nor in other wise, O tyrants, must we laugh at your liberalities, than we do at the thief who should take his guests to his house, and spread upon his

reason rather than the senses" (*De Vulg. El.*, i. 6). This exclamation of Dante's is taken as one of the arguments to prove the late date of book iv.

[1] Here Dante repeats the assertion of book i. ch. 12, that *Justice* is to be the subject of the fourteenth book. In book ii. ch. 1 he says it is to be *Allegory*.

[2] *Ethics*, iv. 1.

[3] "Liberality is most agreeable to man's nature, but necessitates manly caution. For in the first place we must take care lest our kindness hurt those it is meant to assist, and others. In the next place, it should not exceed our abilities" (*Offices*, i. 14).

table the cloth stolen from the altar with the ecclesiastical symbols still upon it, and think that others will not know it.[1] Listen, obstinate ones, to what Tullius says against you in his *Offices:* "There are certainly many desirous to be famous and glorious who take away from some to give to others;[2] esteeming themselves as good men, if they enrich their friends by any means whatever. But this is so entirely contrary to what ought to be done, that nothing can be more so."

8. It also befits this age to be *affable,* to speak of the good, and to listen willingly to the same;[3] because it is well to discourse of the good when one is listened to. And this age, indeed, carries with it a semblance of authority, which causes it to be heard [with] more [deference] than [is paid to] any earlier age. And it seems that the old man should know more good and beautiful things, from his long experience of life. Wherefore Tullius says in his *De Senectute,* speaking in the person of the elder Cato,[4]

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[1] This passage is very suggestive of Dante's attacks upon ecclesiastical abuses in *Purg.*, 20. 87, *et seq.*; *Par.*, 9. 127, *et seq.*; 27. 40, *et seq.*

[2] "With gains ill-gotten thou wouldst do great deeds."
(*Par.*, 5. 33.)

"Therefore, although the thief may help the poor with that which he has stolen, that help ought not to be called almsgiving; but it is an action which, if done with his own substance, would have the nature of almsgiving" (*De Mon.*, ii. 6; see Cicero's *Offices*, i. 14).

[3] In the first paragraph of this chapter, affability is described as "rejoicing to say and hear all that is for the good of others."

[4] Marcius Porcius Cato, Roman censor, commonly called "the elder Cato" to distinguish him from Cato of Utica. He died at a great age, about 151 B.C. He was famed for the rigid severity of his morals, and he wrote a work called *Origines* (antiquities), of which some fragments still remain.

"Both my desire for, and my pleasure in, conversation have grown stronger than of old."[1]

9. And that all four of these things[2] are appropriate to this age, Ovid shows us in the seventh of his *Metamorphoses*, where he tells how Cephalus of Athens came to Æacus the king for succour, during the war of Athens with Crete. He shows that the aged Æacus was *prudent*, when, having lost nearly all his people in a pestilence caused by the corruption of the air,[3] he wisely resorted to God, and asked of Him the restoration of his dead people; and because of his good sense, which kept him patient, and caused him to have recourse to God, his people were restored to him, more numerous than before.[4]

10. He [Ovid] shows that Æacus was *just*, when he says that he divided and distributed among his new people his desert land.[5]

11. He shows that he was *liberal*, when he said to Cephalus, after his prayer for aid, "O Athens! ask not help from me, but take it rather; and say not to yourselves, doubtful are the forces of this island, and the condition of my possessions; forces are not

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[1] "I give great thanks to old age, which has increased my desire for conversation" (*De Senect.*, 14).

[2] The aforesaid virtues—prudence, justice, liberality, and affability.

[3] "When was the air so full of pestilence,
The animals, down to the little worm,
All fell, and afterwards the ancient people,
According as the poets have affirmed,
Were from the seed of ants restored again."
(*Inf.*, 29. 60.)

[4] The plague of Ægina is described in Ovid, *Met.*, book vii., where is also given the account of the birth of the Myrmidons, "who still retain the thrift of ants, though now transformed to men."

[5] "Untilled and naked of inhabitants."
(*Inf.*, 20. 84.)

wanting to us, rather indeed we have them in excess, both for attack and defence, and it is a prosperous time, and one that can excuse no refusal."[1] Ah, how many things are to be noted in this answer! but to the good understanding it is sufficient [for us] to put it here as Ovid has put it.

12. He shows that Æacus was *affable*, when he took the trouble[2] to describe to Cephalus in a long speech the history of the pestilence that destroyed his people, and their restoration.

13. By which it is sufficiently evident that to this age four things are appropriate, because the noble nature displays them therein, as the text says. And that the example given may be the more memorable,[3] Ovid says of Æacus the king that he was the father of Telamon, of Peleus,[4] and of Phocus; from which Telamon sprang Ajax, and from Peleus, Achilles.[5]

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1. HAVING finished this division, we have now to proceed to the last one, which begins, "Then in the fourth and last part of her life," where the text means to show what the noble soul does in the last age,

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[1] I have followed the text of the original here, the quotation in the Italian being full of mistakes.

[2] *Diligentemente* is generally used by Dante in the sense of "painstaking."

[3] "Confirm its faith by an example."
(*Par.*, 18. 140.)

[4] Referred to as the father of Achilles in *Inf.*, 31. 5.

[5] "The great Achilles,
Who at the last hour combated with love."
(*Inf.*, 5. 65.)

that is, in *Decrepitude.* And it says that she does two things: one being that she *returns to God*,[1] as to the port whence she set out, when she first entered upon the sea of this life; the other, that *she blesses the voyage which she has made*, because it has been direct and good, and without the bitterness of storms. And here we must observe that, as Tullius says, in his *De Senectute*, "natural death is, as it were, our haven after a long voyage, and our repose."[2] And as a good sailor, when he nears the harbour, lowers his sails, and gently and with feeble headway[3] enters it, so should we lower the sails of our worldly occupations,[4] and return to God with all our mind

[1] "The illustrious soul
Wished to depart, returning to its realm."
(*Par.*, II. 115.)
"That good sorrow which to God re-weds us."
(*Purg.*, 23. 81.)
"The highest desire of everything, and the first implanted by nature, is to return to its source. And God is the source of our souls" (*Conv.*, iv. 12).

[2] "As I approach to death, I seem, as it were, to be getting sight of land, and at length, after a long voyage, to be just coming into harbour" (*De Senect.*, ch. 19).
"The short journey
Of that life which is flying to its end."
(*Purg.*, 20. 38.)
"That life which is a hastening unto death."
(*Purg.*, 23. 54.)
"Hence they move onward unto ports diverse
O'er the great sea of being."
(*Par.*, I. 112.)
"So He bringeth them unto their desired haven" (Ps. cvii. 30). "*Gubernare est movere aliquos in debitem finem, sicut nauta gubernat navum, ducendo eam ad portam*" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* ii., qu. 102, art. 2).

[3] Or steerage-way.

[4] "Now unto that portion of mine age
I saw myself arrived, when each one ought
To lower the sails, and coil away the ropes."
(*Inf.*, 27. 79.)

and heart, so that we may enter our haven with all gentleness and all peace. And our own nature teaches us much as to the gentleness [of natural death]; because in such a death there is no pain, nor any bitterness; but as a ripe apple lightly and without violence detaches itself from the bough,[1] so our soul, without pain, leaves the body in which it has been. Wherefore Aristotle, in his *Youth and Old Age*, says that the death which comes to old age is a death without sadness.[2]

2. And as he who returns from a long journey, even before he enters the gates of his city, is met by his fellow-citizens, so the citizens of the Eternal Life come forth to meet the noble soul, and this because of her good deeds and meditations. So that, being already dedicated to God, and abstracted from worldly things and thoughts, she seems to see those whom she believes are with Him. Listen to what Tullius says, in the person of the aged Cato: "I, indeed, am transported with eagerness to see your fathers whom I have loved; and not only they whom I knew myself, but also they of whom I have heard."[3]

3. Therefore the soul renders herself up to God at this age, and awaits the end of this life with much

[1] "As fruits when they are green are plucked by force from the trees, but when ripe and mellow drop off, so violence ends the life of youths, but maturity that of old men" (Cicero, *De Senect.*, ch. 19).

"Lo! sweetened with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night."
(Tennyson, *The Lotus-Eaters.*)

[2] The death of the old is called by Aristotle *marausis*, consummation; that of the young, *spesis*, violent extinction.

[3] This is another passage which the copyists appear to have injured, and I have therefore corrected it by a reference to the original (see *De Senect.*, ch. 23).

desire; and it seems to her that she is leaving an inn,[1] to return to her own mansion; leaving the road to come into the city; leaving the sea to re-enter the harbour.[2] O miserable and vile, ye who speed with sails all set, into this port! and there, where ye should find repose, are broken by the force of the wind, and wreck yourselves in the place towards which ye have been so long travelling![3] Certes, Sir Lancelot[4] did not try to enter there with sails all set; neither did our most noble Italian, Guido da Montefeltro.[5] These noble ones did indeed lower the sails of their worldly occupations, for in their advanced years they devoted themselves to religion, forsaking every worldly work and pleasure. Nor can

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[1] "And by this road leadeth me to my home."
(*Inf.*, 15. 54.)
And home-returning, less remote they lodge."
(*Purg.*, 27. 111.)
(And see *Conv.*, iv. 12, par. 6.)

[2] "If thou thy star do follow,
Thou canst not fail thee of a glorious port."
(*Inf.*, 15. 55.)

[3] "And I have seen a ship direct and swift
Traverse the sea for its entire course,
To perish in the harbour's mouth at last."
(*Par.*, 13. 136.)

[4] Lancelot of the Lake ended his life as a hermit.

[5] "I was a man of arms, then Cordelier,
Believing thus begirt to make amends."
(*Inf.*, 27. 67.)

Guido da Montefeltro (born 1223), after a stormy life, entered the Franciscan Order at Ancona, November 15, 1296, in his seventy-fourth year. He was sent thence to Assisi, where he died in peace, October 28, 1298. He is put by Dante in the circle of the fraudulent, for the advice he gave Boniface VIII. to enable him to take Palestrina (September, 1298). Dante's favourable mention of Guido here is one of the items that the commentators consider go to prove the *early* date of this book, as Dante had apparently not then heard of the sin of Guido, for which he places him among the fraudulent in the Inferno, that being written, according to Fraticelli, in 1306–1308.

the bonds of matrimony, which hold good in age, excuse any [from the religious life], because not only they who make themselves in habit and in life like St. Benedict, and St. Augustine, and St. Francis, and St. Dominic, devote themselves to religion, but also they who are married can lead a true and good religious life, for God desires nothing religious in us if not the heart. And therefore St. Paul says to the Romans,[1] "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

4. And the noble soul also at this age blesses the years gone by, and well may she bless them; because when her memory turns back to them she remembers her good works, without which she could not come to the port she is approaching, with such wealth nor with such gains. And the noble soul does as the good merchant, who, when he draws near his destination, examines his goods, and says, "If I had not gone by such a road, I should not have had this treasure,[2] nor should I have had that which I shall enjoy in my own city, that I am now approaching;" and therefore he blesses the journey he has made.

5. And that these two things are appropriate to this age, that great poet Lucan shows us by a figure

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[1] Rom. ii. 28, 29.

[2] "There they enjoy and live upon the treasure
Which was acquired while weeping in the exile
Of Babylon, wherein the gold was left."
(*Par.*, 23. 133.)

in the second [book] of his *Pharsalia*, when he says that Marcia returned to Cato at the fourth age, and begged and entreated him to take her back again.[1] By which Marcia is meant the noble soul; and we can thus reduce the figure to the truth. Marcia was a virgin, and in this condition typifies Adolescence; she then became the wife of Cato, and in this condition typifies Youth; then she bore him sons, which typify the virtues described above as befitting young men; and she left Cato and espoused Hortensius, which means that Youth departs, and Old Age arrives.[2] She also bore sons to the latter, meaning the virtues that we have already said are appropriate to Old Age. Hortensius died, by which is typified the end of Old Age, and Marcia, having become a widow (by which widowhood is meant Decrepitude), returned at the beginning of her widowhood to Cato; meaning that the noble soul, at the beginning of its last stage, returns to God. And what earthly man was more worthy to symbolize God than Cato? Certainly none.[3]

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[1] "Eyes of thy Marcia, who in looks still prays thee,
O holy heart, to hold her as thine own."

(*Purg.*, I. 79.)

[2] We must remember that Dante's "Old Age" begins at forty-five.

[3] See first canto of *Purgatory*. "Here on the shores of Purgatory," says Longfellow, in his notes to this passage, "the countenance of Cato is adorned with the four stars which are the four virtues—Justice, Prudence, Fortitude, and Temperance—and it is foretold of him that his garments will shine brightly at the last day. And here he is the symbol of Liberty, since for her sake to him 'not bitter was death in Utica;' and the meaning of Purgatory is spiritual liberty, or freedom from sin through purification, 'the glorious liberty of the children of God.' Therefore, in thus selecting the 'Divine Cato' for the guardian of this realm, Dante shows himself to have greater freedom than the critics who accuse him of 'a perverse theology in saving the soul of an idolater and suicide.'"

6. And what says Marcia to Cato? "While there was blood in me" (that is, Youth), "while I still possessed the virtue of maturity" (that is, Old Age,[1] which is certainly the mother of the other virtues, as has been shown above), "I obeyed and fulfilled all thy commandments," says Marcia (that is to say, the soul occupied itself in the performance of all civic duties). And she says, "I took two husbands" (that is, she had been fruitful at both ages). "Now that my womb is weary," says Marcia, "and that I can bear no more children, I return to thee, not to be given to another spouse"[2] (that is to say, the noble soul, recognizing that it has no longer any power to bear fruit, and feeling that all its members have grown weak, returns to God, that is, to Him Who has no need of bodily powers).

7. And Marcia says, "Give me the covenant of the ancient beds; give me the name alone of marriage"[3] (that is to say, the noble soul says to God, "Give me now, O Lord, Thy repose"[4]). And Marcia says, "Grant me at least, in what is left of life, to be called thine; and two reasons move me to say this: one is, that after me, men may say I died the wife of Cato; the other is, that after me, men

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[1] Or *maturity.*

[2] Dante thus translates and interprets the verses of Lucan, in the *Pharsalia*, book ii. 338, *et seq.*: "*Dum sanguinis inerat, dum vis materna, peregi Jussa, Cato, et geminos excepi fœta maritos. Visceribus lassis, partuque exhausta, revertor, Jam nulli tradenda viro.*" "While I was able, I performed my duties to the world," says the noble soul, "but now, conscious of failing limbs and senses, I return to that God who has no need of bodily powers, but can be served in spirit."

[3] "*Da fœdara prisci Illibata tori: Da tantum nomen inane Connubii*" (*Phars.*, ii. 342).

[4] "Come unto us the peace of thy dominion."
(*Purg.*, II. 7.)

may say that thou didst not repulse me, but didst espouse me with good will." [1]

8. These two reasons move the noble soul, for she wishes to depart from this life the spouse of God, and wishes to show that He was gracious to His creature. Oh, misbegotten and wretched men! who would rather depart this life bearing the name of Hortensius than that of Cato! [2] With whose name it is beautiful to close what it was fitting to say concerning the signs of Nobility, because in him Nobility in every age displayed them all.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1. AND now the text having been explained, and also the signs which at each age are apparent in the noble man, and by which he can be recognized (and without which he cannot be [noble], any more than the sun without light or the fire without heat), the text cries out to those people in the last part where Nobility is treated,[3] and says, "O ye who have listened to me,[4] *Behold ye now how many are deceived!*" That is, they who being of famous and

[1] This passage is very different in the original: "*Liceat tumulo scripsisse Catonis Marcia: nec dubium longo quæratur in ævo, Mutarim primas expulsa, an tradita, tædas.*" After the toils of life the soul seeks repose, and implores only to leave this world as the spouse of God, the creature to whom He has shown favour.

[2] Here the name of Hortensius seems to signify the things of this world, to which the soul belongs who has not become one with God, and so "purged away the smoke-stains of this world" (*Purg.*, II. 30).

[3] The last line of the seventh stanza of canzone iii.

[4] "O ye who have listened to me" is not in the canzone. Dante seems to have felt the need of a link in the chain of his ideas. He goes on to explain who *the deceived ones* are, *i.e.* all those holding the erroneous opinions described in the second, third, and fourth verses.

ancient lineage, or descended from excellent fathers, believe themselves to be noble, although there is no nobility in them. And here arise two questions, which, at the end of this book, it would be well to understand.

Messer Manfredi da Vico,[1] who now calls himself Prætor and Prefect, might say, "Whatsoever I may be, I recall to mind and represent my ancestors, who by their nobility deserved the office of prefect, and deserved to assist in the coronation of the emperor, and deserved to receive the Rose[2] from the Roman Pastor;[3] [therefore] I am worthy to receive honour and reverence from the people." And this is the first question.

3. The second is, that they who belong to the San Nazzaro of Pavia, or the Piscicelli of Naples,[4] might say, "If Nobility is such as has been said, that is, a Divine seed graciously planted within the human soul, and a race or family has no soul, as is evident, then no family or race can call itself noble; and this is contrary to the opinion of those who call our families the most noble of their [respective] cities."

4. The first question is answered by Juvenal in the eighth *Satire*,[5] when he begins as if exclaiming,

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[1] Nothing is known of this descendant of the lords of Sirimpopoli, near Viterbo. He was probably some unworthy scion of a noble race.

[2] The Golden Rose is a decoration solemnly blessed by the Pope on the Fourth Sunday in Lent, and sent by him to some church, or to some great personage, as a distinguished honour.

[3] The Pope is called "the Roman Pastor" in *Purg.*, 19. 107, and "the Pastor of the Church" in *Par.*, 5. 77.

[4] Two noble Italian families, chosen, apparently, simply as examples.

[5] "*Stemmata quid faciunt? quid prodest . . . Pictos . . . ostende vultus majorum . . . si . . . male vivetur?*" (Juvenal, in the eighth *Satire*). Decimus Junius Juvenal was born in Aquino, about the year 47, and died about 130. He was a contemporary of Statius, and sur-

"Of what use are these honours which come down from the ancients, if he who wishes to clothe himself with them leads a bad life? if he who talks about his ancestors, and sets forth their great and wonderful deeds, occupies himself in low and miserable ways? Therefore," continues the satiric poet, "who will call a man noble because of his good family, who is not worthy of that family? That were no other than to call a dwarf Atlas."[1] Then he goes on to say to such a man, "There is no difference between thee and the statue erected to the memory of thy ancestor, except that its head is of marble, and thine is living."[2] And here (I say it with reverence) I disagree with the poet, because the statue (whether of marble, or of wood, or of metal), remaining as a memorial of some worthy man, differs much in effect from his wicked descendants; for the statue always confirms the good opinion of those who have heard of the fair fame of him to whom it was erected, and it inspires it [this good opinion] in others. But the wicked son or grandson does quite the contrary,[3] because he weakens the good opinion of those who

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vived him about thirty years. Dante puts him in the Pagan Limbo of Purgatory, as the bearer of affectionate messages from Statius to Virgil, which shows that he was ignorant of the survival of Juvenal. Statius is said to have died at Naples, about A.D. 96.

[1] I have followed Giuliani, who reads "Atlas," as in the original, instead of the usual word "giant." "*Nanum cujusdam atlanta vocamus*" (Juvenal, *Sat.*, viii. 30). The words in Italian, *gigante* and *atlante*, have more similarity than in English. Dante refers to "the great King Atlas," and of "the mountain called Atlas after him," in *De Mon.*, ii. 3.

[2] "Nulla quippe alio vincis discrimine, quam quod Illi marmoreum caput est, tua vivit imago" (*Sat.*, viii. 54).

[3] In *Purg.*, 14. 121, Dante speaks of Ugolino dei Fantolini, who died without offspring, as therefore secure that his name would not be dishonoured by his descendants.

have heard well of his ancestors; for each one says of himself, "It cannot be that the ancestors of this man were all they say, since from their seed such a plant has arisen.[1]" Therefore, not honour but dishonour should they receive who bear false witness against the good. And therefore Tullius says "that the son of the good man should strive to render worthy witness to his father." Therefore, according to my judgment, as he who defames a worthy man deserves that all men should fly from him and not listen to him, so a bad man descended from good ancestors deserves to be repulsed by all; and the good man should close his eyes, that he may not see this shame[2] dishonouring that goodness of which alone the memory remains.[3] And this is enough for the present concerning the first question.

5. To the second question we may answer that a race of itself has no soul, and yet it is true that it is called noble, and in a certain way it is so. Here we must observe that every *whole* is made up of its parts, and that there is one [kind of] whole which is of one essence with its parts; as in a man there is one essence common to the whole and every part of him; and what is said of a part, in the same way may be said

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[1] "Not let them touch the plant,
If any still upon their dunghill rise,
In which may yet revive the consecrated
Seed of those Romans."
(*Inf.*, 15. 74.)

[2] The Tuscans call a bad son "*il vituperio della sua casa*," the shame of his house.

[3] "And upon earth I left my memory
Such, that the evil-minded people there
Commend it, but the example do not follow."
(*Par.*, 19. 16.)

of the whole. There is another whole which is not of one essence with its parts (such as a heap of grain), but possesses a secondary essence, the result of the many kernels [composing it], which in themselves have the true and primary essence.[1] And in such a whole, whatever we may call the qualities of the parts, determines what it is; whence we say a white heap [of grain] because the kernels composing it are white. However, this whiteness is more in the kernels in the first place, and as a secondary result in the heap itself, and therefore it may secondarily be called white.

6. And in such a way we may call a race or a family *noble*. For we must observe that, as in order to make a white heap, the white kernels must predominate; so, in order to make a race noble, noble men must predominate therein; I say *predominate*, meaning that they should be more numerous than the others, so that their goodness should prevail [2] to obscure and hide the contrary element among them.

7. And as from a white heap of grain we may take away the wheat, kernel by kernel, and substitute red maize,[3] till at last the colour of the whole heap would be changed; so in a noble family all the good men may die, one by one, and bad men be born, till

[1] That is, the character of the whole heap depends upon the character of the individual kernels: if they are white, the heap derives from them the (secondary) characteristic of whiteness.

[2] Literally, "should *with its cry* obscure," etc., as in *Purg.*, II. 94—

"Now Giotto has the cry,
So that the other's fame is growing dim."

[3] Giuliani follows the first editions, which read *saggina* instead of *meliga*, both meaning "maize." The Tuscan peasants, he says, especially in a bad season, still use this red maize, mixed with rye, to make their bread, so that, to use their own phrase, it looks like a brick.

its name should be changed, and it should be called, not noble, but vile [1] [ignoble]. And thus the second question has been sufficiently answered.

CHAPTER XXX.

1. AS we have shown in the third chapter of this book, this [third] canzone has three principal parts. Therefore, having discussed two, the first of which begins in the aforesaid chapter, and the second in the sixteenth (so that the first is completed in thirteen, and the second in fourteen, chapters, not counting the introduction to the treatise on the canzone, which is comprised in two chapters), in this thirtieth and last chapter we have to speak briefly of the third principal part, which was made as a *tornata* [2] to this canzone for its further embellishment, and begins, "*Against these erring ones, canzone, go.*"

2. And here we should notice, principally, that every good workman at the end of his work should ennoble and beautify it as much as possible, that it may leave him more precious and more worthy of fame. And this I mean to do in this part, not as a good workman, but as the follower of such.

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[1] "O thou our poor nobility of blood,

. . . . . .

Truly thou art a cloak that quickly shortens,
So that, unless we piece thee, day by day,
Time goeth round about thee with his shears."
(*Par.*, 16–19.)

"To hear how races waste themselves away,
Will seem to thee no novel thing nor hard."
(Ibid., 76.)

[2] *Tornata* corresponds most nearly to the French *l'envoy*.

3. I say, then, "*Against these erring ones*," etc. This "*against these erring ones*" is all one phrase, and is the name of this canzone, taken from the example of our good brother Thomas Aquinas,[1] who to one of his books, which he wrote for the confusion of all who stray from our faith, gave the title of *Against the Gentiles*.[2]

4. I say, then, that thou shalt depart, as if I said, "Thou art now perfect, and it is time that thou shouldst no longer stand still, but shouldst go on thy way; for thine errand is a great one."

5. "*And when thou shalt have come Unto that place wherein our lady dwells*," tell her thine errand. Here we should observe that, as our Lord says, we must not throw pearls before swine, because it can profit them nothing, and is an injury to the pearls; and, as Æsop the poet says in his first fable, a grain of corn is worth more than a pearl to a cock, and therefore he will leave the pearl to pick up the corn. And, considering this, I say be prudent, and command the canzone to discover its errand there where this lady, that is, Philosophy, may be found. And this most noble lady will be found when her chamber is found, that is, the soul wherein she dwells. And this Philosophy not only dwells with the wise, but

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[1] Fraticelli considers this mention of Thomas Aquinas as "our *brother* Thomas" an evidence of the early date of this part of the *Convito*, in which opinion he follows Scolari. But, as Giuliani suggests, the canonization was begun in 1319, but not completed till 1323, two years after the death of Dante, when for the first time "the angelic doctor's" name was added to the list of saints. So that in any case this date-point could only prove the fourth book of the *Convito* to have been written *before* 1319.

[2] Or, *Against the Heathen*.

also, as has been proved before in another Book,[1] she is wherever dwells the love of her. And to such as these, I say, the canzone should disclose its errand, because to them its meaning will be of use, and by them will be harvested.

6. And I bid it say to this lady, "*I go to speak to all men of thy friend.*" Well may Nobility be called her friend, because they love each other so much, that Nobility is ever asking for her, and Philosophy never turns her most sweet gaze towards any other. Oh, what great and beautiful adornment is given to Nobility, in the last part of this canzone, by calling her the friend of her whose rightful mansion[2] is in the most secret place of the Divine Mind!

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[1] Love is defined in the beginning of *Conv.*, iii. 2, as "the spiritual union of the soul with the beloved object."

[2] James Russell Lowell, in his admirable essay on Dante, suggests this reading of *magione* ("mansion") instead of *ragione* ("reason"). The phrase might be translated, "whose *cause*," or "the reason of whose being;" but it seems to me that the reading I have given is more in accordance with the chapter quoted above, where *mind* is defined as "that highest and most precious part of the soul which is Deity." And also book iii. ch. 15, where Dante says that "Wisdom is the mother of every principle, and [in conjunction] with her God began the world, . . . that is, she was in the Divine thought or intellect when the world was made" (see Prov. viii. 22, 30; Wisd. ix. 9).

APPENDIX.

THE EPISTLE OF DANTE TO CAN GRANDE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE EDITION OF FRATICELLI.

IT is an undoubted fact that Dante found refuge at the court of Can Grande Scaligero, Lord of Verona, but the critics differ as to the date. Fraticelli concurs fully in the opinion of Troya in fixing the time of this sojourn as the end of 1316 or the beginning of 1317. From the epithet of "victorious," applied by Dante to Can Grande, Dionisi thinks that the letter must have been written at least before the 20th of August, 1320, on which day Can Grande was completely defeated before the walls of Padua. The letter is undoubtedly genuine, portions of it having been quoted by Boccaccio in his commentary of 1370; by Jacopo della Lana, 1328; and by Filippo Villano, who succeeded to the chair of Boccaccio in 1391.

The letter was published for the first time in the *Galleria di Minerva*, Venice, 1700, in a terribly incorrect form, and reproduced with the same imperfections in the edition of the *Divine Comedy* of Berno, Verona, 1749; and in the edition of Dante's works, published in Venice 1757, by Zatta. We owe to Witte its careful emendation and republication.

THE EPISTLE.

To the magnificent and victorious lord, the lord Can Grande della Scala, vicar-general of the sacred Cæsarean principality of the city of Verona and the town of Vicenza (*urbe Verona et*

civitate Vicentia), his most devoted Dante Alighieri, Florentine by birth but not by customs, wishes happiness in his daily life, and perpetual increase of his glorious name.

1. The excellent praises of your magnificence, which diligent Fame spreads abroad as she flies, affect men in various ways, seeing that they exalt some with hope of prosperity, while others sink in terror of extermination. Verily such renown, superior to that of any modern enterprise, I for some time considered to be much amplified by Fame, and to greatly exceed the reality. But that a long uncertainty should not keep me too much in doubt, as the Queen of Sheba was impelled to go to Jerusalem, and Pallas to Helicon, so I came to Verona, to examine with my own eyes the things heard of. And there I beheld your glories; beheld also your bounties, and partook of them; and as beforehand I had suspected the exaggeration of report, I afterwards found the reality to exceed it. As for that which happened, as well as for the things only heard, I was at first, and with a certain subjection of soul, your well-wisher, so at first seeing you I became your devoted servant and friend.

2. Nor do I consider that, in assuming the name of friend, I incur, as some may object, the reproach of presumption, because by the sacred bond of friendship more men are united to their inferiors than to their equals. For if we consider friendships which are both delightful and profitable, whoso considers carefully will see that eminent personages are more apt to entertain them for their inferiors. And if we consider friendship itself, true and faithful friendship, will it not perhaps appear that many great and illustrious princes had as friends men of obscure fortunes, but of singular virtue? And why not, seeing that even the friendship of man to God is not hindered by the immense distance between them? And if any are revolted at this assertion, let them listen to the Holy Spirit, who declareth some men to have partaken of His friendship. For in the Book of Wisdom (vii. 14) we read of Wisdom that "she is a treasure unto men that never faileth, which they that use become the friends of God."[1] But the ignorant

[1] See also ver. 27 of the same chapter.

common people form judgments without discernment; and as they think of the sun as a foot broad, so about one thing and another they are deceived by their credulity. They, however, to whom it is given to recognize the best in us, ought not to follow in the footsteps of the herd, but rather should oppose their errors; because, being vigorous of intellect and reason, and endowed with a certain divine liberty, no custom can tyrannize over them. Nor is this to be wondered at, seeing that it is not the laws that control them, but they the laws. It appears, then, by what I have said, that I can be a devoted servant and friend without being presumptuous.

3. Preferring, therefore, your friendship to all others as a most dear treasûre, I desire, with vigilant foresight and watchful care, to preserve it. Therefore, as in the dogmas of moral philosophy we are taught that to preserve and equalize friendship some reciprocity is necessary,[1] so in return for the benefits I have received, it is a sacred office for me to follow out the analogy; wherefore I have many times carefully looked over those trifles I could give to you, and have examined those set apart, seeking out for you the most worthy and the most acceptable. Nor could I find anything more appropriate to this same pre-eminence of yours, than that sublime canto of the *Commedia*, which is adorned with the title of *Paradise*; and this, with the present Epistle, as its appropriate dedication, I inscribe to you, I offer to you, I recommend finally to you.

4. Nor will my ardent affection suffer me to let this pass simply in silence—that such a gift may seem to confer more fame and honour upon the receiver than the giver; for, on the contrary, it seemed to them who considered that dedication that I uttered therein a prophecy of the growing glory of your name; which was its intention. But partaking but recently of your favour, which I so highly prize, and caring little for my life, I will hasten on more quickly towards my aim. Therefore, having finished the epistolary formula, I will undertake briefly, in the manner of an expounder, to treat of certain things by way of introduction to the work I offer.

5. In the second of the *Metaphysics*, the philosopher says, "As a thing is related to being, so is it related to truth;" of which

[1] See *Conv.*, iii. 1, par. 3; and Aristotle, *Ethics*, ix. 1.

the reason is this—that the truth of a thing, which consists in truth as in its subject, is the perfect similitude of the thing as it is.[1] Of existing things, indeed, some have absolute being in themselves; others have their being dependent on another, through a certain relation, such as being of the same time, but with reference to another; like the relatives father and son, master and servant, double and half, the whole and a part, and other similar things, in so far as they are such. And since their being depends on another, consequently their truth depends on another. If the half be unknown, it were impossible to know its double, and thus it might be said of the rest.

6. They, then, who would present something by way of introduction to a portion of any work, find it necessary to give some idea of the whole work to which that portion belongs. Whence I, wishing indeed to say something by way of introduction to the above-named portion of the *Commedia*, have esteemed it best to prefix one that would do for the whole work, so that the prelude to the part thereof may be easier and more complete. There are six things, therefore, that must be sought out in beginning any instructive work; that is to say, the *subject*, the *agent*, the *form*, the *end*, the *title of the book*, and *the nature of its philosophy*. Among these things there are three in which the present part, which I have determined to dedicate to you, differs from the rest; that is, in the *subject*, the *form*, and the *title*: in the rest, however, it does not vary, as will be seen by looking at it. Therefore, respecting the consideration of the whole, these three things must be sought out separately; which, being done, will serve sufficiently for the introduction to the part as well. Afterwards we will seek out the other three, not only in their relation to the whole, but also to this portion which I offer to you.

7. For the comprehension of the things we have to say, however, it must be observed that the meaning of this work is not simple, but rather may be called complex,[2] that is to say, it has many meanings; because the meaning of the letter is quite

[1] Here Dante makes a distinction between absolute truth and relative truth; that which is true of the thing itself, and that which is true of it only in its relation to other things.

[2] *Polisensa*, a word used also by Boccaccio, i. 1: "This book may be called *polisenso*, having many meanings."

different from that of the things signified by the letter. The first is called *literal*, the second *allegorical* or *mystical*.[1] Which method of writing, in order that it may be made more clear, may be studied in these words: "When Israel went out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from a barbarous people, the Jewish nation was consecrated to God, and Israel became His dominion."[2] If we look only at the *letter*, we see signified here the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt in the time of Moses; if at the *allegory*, we see signified our redemption wrought by Jesus Christ; if at the *moral* sense, we perceive the conversion of the soul from the tears and misery of sin to a state of grace; if at the *anagogical*, we recognize the passage of the holy soul from the slavery of present corruption to the liberty of the eternal glory. And although these mystical senses are distinguished by various names, they may all be called generally *allegorical*, because they differ from the literal, or rather historical. *Allegory*, in fact, comes from ἀλλοῖος, a Greek word, meaning "other," or "diverse."

8. This understood, it is evident that the *subject* must be complex to enable it to be treated in these various senses; and, therefore, we must first look at the subject of this work taken strictly according to the letter, and then at the same subject taken strictly in its allegorical meaning. The subject, then, of the whole work, considered only according to the letter, is simply the state of souls after death, because on and around this subject the whole work turns. If, then, we go on to consider the work according to its allegorical meaning, the subject is man, subjected, in so far as by the freedom of his will he deserves it, to just reward or punishment.

9. The *form*, then, is duplex; that is, the form of the work and the form of its treatment. The form of the work is triplex, according to its triple division. The first division is this: the whole work is divided into three canticles; the second, each canticle is divided into cantos; the third, each canto is divided into rhythms. The form, or rather the mode, of treatment is *poetic, figurative, descriptive, digressive, abbreviative*;[3]

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[1] See *Conv.*, ii. 1, pars. 2–4.

[2] Comp. Ps. cxiv. 1, 2.

[3] *Transuntivo* may mean "abbreviative" (like a compendium or abstract), or it may come from *transunzione*, and mean "explanatory."

and besides, *definitive*, *divisive*, *probative*, *improbative*, and *positive in examples.*

10. The *title* of the book is this: *Here begins the Comedy of Dante Alighieri, Florentine by birth, not by customs.* Concerning which we must know that "comedy" comes from κώμη, *country*, and ᾠδή, *song*, whence "comedy" is, as it were, *a rustic song*. Comedy, in fact, is a species of poetic narration differing from all others; as to its matter, it differs from tragedy in this, that tragedy is in its beginning quiet and admirable, and in its end or catastrophe fetid and horrible. For this very reason it is called tragedy, from τράγος, *goat*, and ᾠδή, *song*, as it were, *goat-song*, that is, fetid like a goat, as we may see in the tragedies of Seneca. Comedy, however, begins with a certain asperity, but its matter ends prosperously, as we may see in the comedies of Terence. Therefore some writers of epistles were in the habit, when they would make their salutation, of putting in its place, "A tragic beginning and a comic end."[1] Likewise in their manner of speech do tragedy and comedy differ from each other; for one speaks in an elevated and sublime, the other in a weak and humble style, as Horace says in his *Art of Poetry* (v. 89, *et seq.*), where he admits that comedy may sometimes speak like tragedy, and the reverse.

> "Nevertheless her voice doth Comedy sometimes
> Lift up on high, and Chremes his anger speaketh
> In language majestic; while Tragedy often
> Lamenteth her woes in the rustic speech of a peasant."

By this it is made evident why the present work is called a comedy;[2] because, if we consider the matter thereof, in the beginning it is horrible and fetid, being Hell; in the end prosperous, desirable, and pleasant, being Paradise. If we consider its language, it is humble and weak, because it is the vulgar tongue, which women ever use. There are, indeed, other kinds of poetic diction, such as the bucolic ode, the elegy, the satire, and the hymn, as we may also see in Horace's *Poetry*; but we have nothing to do with these at present.

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[1] Johannis de Janua (writing in 1286) says this greeting meant, "A good beginning and a cheerful end to you."

[2] The title of *Divine* was first prefixed to the *Comedy* in the Venetian edition of 1555, after Landino, in the edition of 1481, had called the poet "divine" (Scartazzini).

11. It may now be seen how we are to determine the subject of the offered part. Because if the subject of the whole work under consideration, taken according to the letter, is "the state of souls after death, not in a special but a general sense," it is evident that the subject of this part is a similar state but in a special sense, that is, "the state of beatified souls after death." And if the subject of the whole work, considered according to its allegorical meaning, is man, subjected, in so far as by the freedom of his will he deserves it, to just reward or punishment, it is evident that this part has a special subject, which is, "man, in so far as his merit receives its just reward."

12. And so, by the appointed form of the whole, we see sufficiently the form of the part. Wherefore, if the form of the whole is triplex, this part is only duplex, being divided into canticle and cantos; its own form not being susceptible to the first division, as it makes a part of it.[1]

13. The title of the book also appears; because the title of the whole work being, as we have seen above, *Here begins the Comedy*, etc., the title of this part will be, *Here begins the Third Canticle of the Comedy of Dante*, etc., *which is called Paradise.*

14. These three things found out, wherein the part differs from the whole, we have now to consider the other three, wherein there is no difference whatever from the whole. The *agent*, therefore, of the whole and of the part is the one already named, and appears to be the same in both.

15. The *end* of the whole and of the part may be manifold, that is, it may be both near and remote. But setting aside all subtlety of investigation, we may say briefly, that the end of both [the whole and the part] is to rescue those who live in this life from their state of misery, and to guide them to the state of blessedness.

16. *The nature of the philosophy* governing both the whole and the part is moral action, or *ethics*, because the object of the whole work is not speculative, but practical. Therefore, even if certain places or passages are treated in a speculative manner, this is not for the sake of speculation, but of operation;

[1] That is, the *Paradiso* being already divided, as one canticle of the *Commedia*, its form as a canticle is not susceptible of further division.

because, as the Philosopher says in the second of the *Metaphysics*, "practical men sometimes speculate upon what they do."

17. These things, then, being determined, we have to proceed, after some preface, to the exposition of the letter ; but we must first declare that the exposition of the letter is nothing else than the manifestation of the form of the work. This part, then, or rather this third canticle, which is called *Paradise*,[1] has two principal divisions, that is, the *prologue* and the *execution* itself. The second division commences with—

> "Riseth for men from many a different point
> The lamp of the world."
>
> (*Par.*, I. 37 ; see note I.)

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[1] PROLOGUE TO THE "PARADISE."

1 The glory of Him who moveth everything
Doth penetrate the universe, and shine
In one part more, and in another less.
3 Within that heaven which most His light receives
Was I, and things beheld which to repeat
Nor knows nor can, who from above descends ;
9 Because in drawing near to its desire
Our intellect ingulfs itself so far,
That after it the memory cannot go.
12 Truly, whatever of the holy realm
I had the power to treasure in my mind,
Shall now become the subject of my song.
15 O good Apollo, for this last emprise
Make of me such a vessel of thy power
As giving the beloved laurel asks !
18 One summit of Parnassus hitherto
Has been enough for me, but now with both
I needs must enter the arena left.
21 Enter into my bosom, thou, and breathe
As at the time when Marsyas thou didst draw
Out of the scabbard of those limbs of his.
24 O power divine, lend'st thou thyself to me,
So that the shadow of the blessed realm
Stamped in my brain I can make manifest,
27 Thou'lt see me come unto thy darling tree,
And crown myself thereafter with those leaves,
Of which the theme and thou shalt make me worthy.
30 So seldom, Father, do we gather them
For triumph or of Cæsar or of poet
(The fault and shame of human inclinations),
33 That the Peneian foliage should bring forth
Joy to the joyous Delphic deity,
When any one it makes to thirst for it.

18. As to the first part, be it known that although in common speech it may be called an *exordium*, yet, properly speaking, it ought only to be called a *prologue;* and with this the Philosopher seems to agree in the third of the *Rhetoric*, where he says that "the proem is the beginning of a rhetorical oration, as the prologue in poetry, and the prelude in music." And, again, we must take note that this prologue, which can be generally called *exordium*, is made in different ways by poets and rhetoricians. The rhetoricians were in the habit of prefacing the things they had to say in a way to captivate the soul of the listener. But the poets do not simply do this; on the contrary, they also make some sort of an invocation. And this is fitting for them to do; for, a grand invocation being necessary to them, they should, beyond the common manner of men, implore from the supernal Substances a gift almost divine. Therefore the present prologue is divided into two parts: for in the first is announced what is to be said, and in the second is the invocation to Apollo; and this second part begins with—

"O good Apollo, for this last emprise."

(*Par.*, I. 13.)

19. As to the first part, we must observe that for a good beginning three things are required, as Tullius says in the *New Rhetoric;* that is, that the listener should be made sympathetic, attentive, and docile; and this is especially necessary, as the same Tullius tells us, when the subject is of a marvellous nature. The matter, in fact, of which the present book treats being marvellous, therefore these three things in the beginning of the exordium or prologue are specially pre-

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[36] A little spark is followed by great flame;
Perchance with better voices after me
Shall prayer be made that Cyrrha may respond!

(END OF PROLOGUE.)

[39] To mortal men by diverse passages
Uprises the world's lamp, etc.

I think a better reading of these last two lines is that I have given in the text—

"Riseth for men from many a different point
The lamp of the world."

pared for it. Wherefore it says that it will speak of what the mind can retain of the things seen in the first heaven. In which words all three of these things are included; since the usefulness of what is to be said causes good will; its marvellousness, attention; and its possibility, docility. It indicates the useful, when it says that it will speak of those things that through their delights draw to themselves so strongly the desire of men, that is to say, the rewards of Paradise. It treats of the marvellous in promising to speak of things so arduous and so sublime, that is, the conditions of the celestial kingdom. It demonstrates the possible, when it speaks of what the mind has been able to retain, since what one has done others may do. All these things are indicated in those words where it speaks of being in the first heaven, and wishing to tell as much about the celestial kingdom as the mind could treasure and retain. Having observed, therefore, the goodness and the perfection of the prologue, let us go on to the letter.

20. It says, then, that "*The glory of Him who moveth everything*"—who is God—"*Doth penetrate the universe, and shine;*" but in this manner, it shines "*In one part more, and in another less.*" That it does shine everywhere, reason and authority declare. Reason, thus: everything that is, has its being in itself or from another. But it is evident that nothing can exist of itself except the One, first or principle of all, which is God. And since to exist does not necessarily imply self-existence, and absolute self-existence is the province but of One, that is, of the first or principle, which is the cause of all, so all things that exist, except this one, have their being from another. If, then, we take the last, or any other, of the beings in the universe, it is evident that it receives this being from some one, and that that One either receives it from itself or from some other. If from itself, then it is the first [of things]; if from another, then this other receives it either from itself or some other. And thus we should have to go on *ad infinitum*, with causal agents, as is proved in the third of the *Metaphysics*.[1]

[1] Fraticelli says that this is the reading of the Codices, but that he prefers to read *the second*, as it seems to him that Dante had in mind the second chapter of the second book. I do not agree with him, as the third book is "an investigation of first principles and primal causes."

Which being impossible, we must come to the first [cause], which is God. And thus all that is has its being either indirectly or directly from Him; wherefore the second cause, moving from the first, acts upon the thing caused like a mirror, which receives a ray and reflects it, because the first cause is the greater cause. And this is written in the book *Of Causes*,[1] that "every primary cause influences the thing caused more than the second universal cause." But this relates to being.

21. As to essence, I reason thus: Every essence but the primal one is caused; otherwise there would be several existing of themselves, which is impossible. That which is caused, is caused by nature or by intellect; and if by nature, it is consequently caused by intellect, nature being the work of intelligence. Everything which is caused, then, is caused directly or indirectly, by some Intelligence. And as power belongs to the essence of which it is predicated, the power of the causated essence must proceed entirely and solely from the same cause, if that is intellectual.[2] And as it was necessary before to go back to the first cause of being itself, so now [we must return] to the primal essence and power. Whence it appears that every essence and power proceeds from the primal one, and that the inferior Intelligences receive the light as from a sun, and after the manner of a mirror reflect the rays of the superior to their inferior.[3] Which Dionysius seems to touch upon with sufficient clearness where he speaks of the celestial hierarchy.[4] And for this reason it is written in the book *Of Causes* that "every intelligence is full of forms."[5] We see, therefore, how reason can prove to us that the Divine light,

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[1] By Albertus Magnus (book ii. tr. i. ch. 5, p. 567).

[2] Dante seems to mean that, power being identical with the essence of which it is predicated, they must have the same origin.

[3] "Yonder mirror
That up and down conducteth with its light."
(*Purg.*, 4. 62)

"Above us there are mirrors, thrones you call them,
From which shines out on us God Judicant."
(*Par.*, 9. 61.)

[4] To Dionysius the Areopagite was attributed a work called the *Celestial Hierarchy*, the great storehouse of all lore relating to the nature and operations of angels.

[5] Of Albertus Magnus, ch. 21, p. 602.

that is, the Divine goodness, wisdom, and power, can shine everywhere.

22. And as by science, so is it proved by authority. The Holy Spirit, in fact, says through Jeremiah,[1] "Do I not fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord;" and in the Psalms,[2] "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I descend into hell, behold Thou art there; if I take the wings," etc. And in the Book of Wisdom[3] we read, "The spirit of the Lord filleth the world." And in the forty-second of Ecclesiasticus [ver. 16], "His works are full of the glory of the Lord." Which is furthermore confirmed by the writings of the pagans, since Lucan says in his ninth book,[4] "Whatever thou dost behold, and whatever thou dost touch, that is Jupiter."

23. It is well said, therefore, that the Divine ray, or rather the Divine glory, penetrates and shines through the universe. *Penetrates*, as regards its essence; *shines*, as regards its being. That which follows, as to *the more or less*, is manifestly true, since we see one thing excellent in one degree, another in an inferior degree; as appears in heaven and the elements; the former being most certainly incorruptible, but the latter corruptible.

24. And after having asserted this truth, it goes on to treat of Paradise, saying that it was "*within that heaven which most His light receives*," that is, which receives most of the glory of God. Whereby we must understand that this heaven is the supreme heaven, which contains all bodies and is contained by none; within which all bodies move, while it remains in eternal quiet, and which receives its virtue from no corporeal substance. And it is called the Empyrean, which is to say, that it is a heaven blazing with fire or rather ardour, not because there is in it material fire or ardour, but spiritual, which is holy love, or charity.

25. That it does receive more of the Divine light than any other, can be proved by two arguments. First, because it

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[1] Jer. xxiii. 24.
[2] Ps. xxxix. 7–9.
[3] Wisdom of Solomon i. 7.
[4] *Pharsalia*, ix. 580.

contains all things and is contained by none ;[1] second, by its eternal quiet or peace. As to the first, it is proved thus: the thing containing stands, respecting the thing contained, in the same relation as the formative [principle] to the formable, as the fourth of the *Physics* has it. But in relation to the whole universe, the first[2] heaven is that which contains all things ; therefore it is in relation to all things, as the formative to the formable, that is to say, it stands to them as cause. And as all power of causation is a certain ray, which proceeds from the first cause, that is, God, it is manifest that this heaven, which has most power of causation, receives most of the Divine light.

26. As to the second, it is proved thus : all that moves, is impelled by something which it does not possess, and which is the end of its motion ; as the heaven of the moon moves because some part of itself has not that towards which it tends, and because some part of it, not having reached that point (which were impossible), moves on to another, therefore is it that that heaven is always moving and never at rest, as is its desire.[3] And what I say of the heaven of the moon is to be understood of all the others except the first one. All those, therefore, which move lack something, and are not quite complete in themselves. But that heaven which is moved by none other is in itself, and in all its parts, perfect to the utmost degree, therefore to its perfection there is no need of motion. And all perfection being a ray from the first [cause], which is the supreme perfection, it is evident that the first heaven receives more of the light of the first [cause], which is God. And although this reason may seem an argument for the confutation of the preceding one, because it does not prove it

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[1] *Conv.*, ii. 4, par. 2, "This is the sovereign edifice of the universe," etc.

[2] *First* in the sense of superior, otherwise the *tenth*.

[3] "That world which most fervent is, and living."
(*Par.*, 23. 113.)

"Know thou that its motion is so swift
Through burning love, by which it is spurred on."
(*Par.*; 28. 44.)

See *Conv.*, ii. 4, par. 1 ; and Albertus Magnus, *De Causis*, ii. 3, ch. 1, p. 620. In this idea Dante anticipates the theory of Schopenhauer, that all motion is a form of will or desire, and agrees with St. Augustine, who speaks of the fall of a stone as caused by its *desire* to rejoin the earth.

simply and by logical methods, nevertheless, if we consider its matter, it proves it well, because it treats of an eternal thing in which a defect might be eternal. If, however, God does not impart motion to this heaven, it is evident that He has given it matter in which there is no defect. And according to this supposition the argument holds good on account of its matter; and it were a similar form of argument if I should say, "If that is a man, he is capable of laughter,"[1] because in convertible propositions a similar reason obtains on account of their matter. It is, therefore, evident that when it says, "*Within that heaven which most light receives*," Paradise, or the empyreal heaven is intended.

27. To the reasons given above, the words of the Philosopher in the first *Of Heaven* correspond, where he says that each heaven excels its inferiors in proportion as it is distant from things here. To this might be added what the Apostle says to the Ephesians about Christ,[2] "He ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things with Himself;" and this is the heaven of the delights of the Lord, of which Ezekiel says,[3] speaking against Lucifer, "Thou, type of resemblance, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty, didst dwell among the delights of the Paradise of God."

28. And after having said that it was in that place of Paradise, it goes on with its description to say that "*things were beheld that to repeat Nor knows nor can, who from above descends.*" And it gives the reason, saying that *our intellect so engulfs itself* in this its desire, that is, God, that the memory cannot follow it. To understand these things we must know that in this life the human intellect,[4] on account of the resemblance of its nature to, and its affinity with, the separate intellectual Substance, when it soars, soars so high, that after its return memory fails it, because it has transcended human conditions. And this is

[1] If man is, he is a laughing animal; and if he is a laughing animal, he is man. "Truly laughter and speech appear to be characteristic of man, and more especially laughter" (*Vita Nuova*, § 25). Aristotle has said that "man alone, of all the animals, laughs."

[2] Eph. iv. 10.

[3] Ezek. xxviii. 12. The English version is very different: "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom," etc.; and "thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God."

[4] Here (as often elsewhere) used by Dante in the sense of *soul*.

indicated by the Apostle, where he speaks to the Corinthians,[1] saying, "I know that this man (whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know; God knoweth) was caught up into Paradise, and heard secret words which it is not lawful for man to utter." Here, then, we see that, having by the flight of the intellect transcended human conditions, he remembered nothing of the things that went on outside him. This is indicated again by Matthew,[2] where he says that the three disciples fell upon their faces, and as if oblivious, afterwards could relate nothing [of what had happened]. And in Ezekiel it is written,[3] "And when I saw it, I fell upon my face." And if these examples do not suffice for the invidious, let them read Richard of St. Victor, in the book *Of Contemplation;*[4] let them read St. Bernard, in the book *Of Consideration;*[5] let them read St. Augustine, in the book *Of the Quantity of the Soul*,[6] and they will no longer be invidious. If, however, through the fault of the speaker, they still howl[7] at a condition of such loftiness, let them read Daniel,[8] where they will find that Nebuchadnezzar also, by the Divine will, saw things [directed] against sinners which afterwards he forgot. For "He who maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,"[9] sometimes mercifully by conversion, sometimes severely by punishment, in greater or less degree as pleaseth Him, manifests His glory, even to them who lead evil lives.

29. Then he beholds,[10] as he says, certain things "*which to*

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 3, 4.

[2] Matt. xvii. 6, 7, where, however, in the English version nothing is said of the inability of the disciples to relate the occurrence.

[3] Ezek. ii. 1.

[4] Book iv. ch. 12. "Richard, who was in contemplation more than man" (*Par.*, 10. 131). He was prior of the school of St. Victor, near Paris (founded at the beginning of the twelfth century). His book on *Contemplation* was in parts, very like the philosophy of Schelling.

[5] Book iv. "Generally, *consideratio* is applied to inquiry, *contemplatio* to intuition. With St. Bernard, the highest kind of *consideratio* is identical with *contemplatio*, and the terms are often used interchangeably" (Vaughan, *Hours with the Mystics*, vol. i., where may also be found an account of Richard of St. Victor).

[6] Giving a scale of the spiritual degrees in the ascent to God.

[7] Literally *bark*, often used by Dante in this sense.

[8] Dan. ii. 3, 5.

[9] Matt. v. 45.

[10] Here Dante for the first time inserts the personal pronoun, as if to mark the difference between the prologue and the poet.

repeat Nor knows nor can, who from above descends." It must be carefully observed that he says, "*nor knows nor can.*" He knows not, because he has forgotten them; he cannot, because if he were able to remember and preserve the conception, he could not put it into words.[1] Many things, in fact, we see with the intellect for which vocal signs are wanting; as Plato has sufficiently demonstrated in his books by the use of metaphor; since by intellectual light many things are visible that words are inadequate to express.

30. Afterwards he says that he will speak of those things of the holy kingdom which he was able "*to treasure in his mind;*" and this he declares to be "*the subject of his song;*" and the nature and number of these things will appear in the executive part.

31. Hence when he says, "*O good Apollo,*" etc., he makes his invocation. And this part has two divisions: in the first, he with his invocation asks a boon; in the second, he persuades Apollo of the need of what he has asked, announcing a certain recompense; and this second part begins, "*O power divine.*" The first part has two divisions: in the first, he asks for the divine aid; in the second, he treats of the necessity of his request, which is the justification of it; and this part begins here, "*One summit of Parnassus hitherto.*"

32. This is the general meaning of the second part of the prologue; I will not explain it at present in detail, because my miserable circumstances force me to abandon this and other things useful to the public good. But from your magnificence I hope that I see the wherewithal given me to proceed hereafter to this profitable exposition.

33. Of the executive part, then, which comes after the prologue, I shall say nothing more at present by way of division or explanation than this—that in that part will be described a continual ascent from heaven to heaven, and it will speak of the blessed souls discovered in each sphere, and will declare that true beatitude to consist in knowing the source of Truth,

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[1] See *Conv.*, iii. 4, par. 4; and *Inf.*, 28. 4—

"All tongues would for a certainty fall short,
By reason of our speech and of our mind,
That have but little room to hold so much."

as appears by [the Gospel of] John, where he says, "This is the true beatitude, to know the only true God;"[1] and by Boëthius, in the third *Of Consolation*,[2] "To see Thee is our end." Hence, to show the glory of the beatitude of these souls, many things will be asked of them (as the beholders of all truth) which in themselves are profitable and delightful. And because the source or beginning, which is God, being found, there is nothing more to seek, He being the *Alpha* and *Omega*[3] (that is, the Beginning and the End, as is shown in the vision of St. John), the book ends in God, who shall be blessed for evermore.[4]

[1] John xvii. 3. The English version reads, "And this is *life eternal*," etc.
[2] Metr. 9.
[3] Rev. xxi. 6; xxii. 14.
[4] The *Vita Nuova* ends with, "That blessed Beatrice, who beholdeth in glory the face of Him *qui est per omnia sæcula benedictus*."

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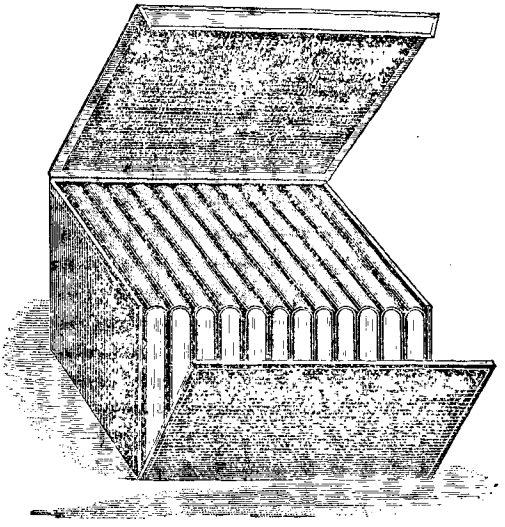

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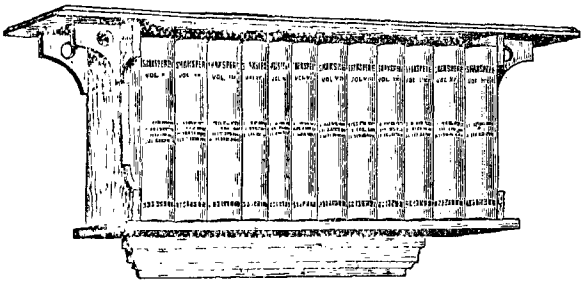

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Salar. My wind, cooling my broth,
Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run
But I should think of shallows and of flats,
And see my wealthy Andrew, dock'd in sand,
Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
And, in a word, but even now worth this,
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
That such a thing bechanc'd would make me sad?
But tell not me: I know Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

Ant. Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

Salar. Why, then you are in love.

Ant. Fie, fie!

Salar. Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad,
Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh, and leap, and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,
Nature hath fram'd strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper;
And other of such vinegar aspect

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